

STECK-VAUGHN

GED

EXERCISE BOOK

WRITING SKILLS, PART TWO THE ESSAY

Practice for the
GED Test One
covering these areas:

The Writing Process
Essay Writing

Includes two Simulated GED Essay
Practice Tests



EXERCISE BOOK

WRITING SKILLS, PART TWO THE ESSAY

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INTRODUCTION

The *Steck-Vaughn GED Exercise Book: Writing Skills, Part Two* provides you with practice in writing an effective composition for the GED Writing Skills, Part II Test. You can use this book to supplement the *Steck-Vaughn GED Writing Sample* book or the *Steck-Vaughn GED Comprehensive Review* book. Cross references to pages in the other two books are supplied for your convenience on exercise pages.

The *Steck-Vaughn GED Exercise Book: Writing Skills, Part One* provides you with review and practice in answering the types of questions found on the GED Writing Skills Test, Part I. This part of the test covers English grammar.

The chart below describes the GED Writing Skills Test. It tells you how many test items there are in each test and how much time you have to complete each test.

Writing Skills Test	
Part I (Grammar)	
55 test items	
75 minutes	
Part II (Essay)	
1 composition	
45 minutes	

The *Steck-Vaughn GED Exercise Book: Writing Skills, Part Two* focuses on Part II (the essay). The book has two main sections: practice exercises and simulated tests.

PRACTICE EXERCISE SECTION

Part II of the GED Writing Skills Test requires you to write an essay on a topic familiar to adults that requires no specialized knowledge. To prepare you for this test, the practice exercise section of this book is divided into seven chapters:

- **Chapter 1**—examines what an essay is and provides examples of the test directions, a sample essay topic, sample student essays written in response to the essay topic, a scoring guide, and scores and commentary for each of the sample essays. Many pages are reprinted from the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education with their permission.
- **Chapter 2**—the planning chapter, examines how to read the topic assignment, write a response statement, and how to list your ideas.
- **Chapter 3**—the organizing chapter, examines how to group your ideas, name each group, expand your groups, and put your groups in order.
- **Chapter 4**—the writing chapter, examines how to write the introduction, the body, and the conclusion of an essay.
- **Chapter 5**—examines how to evaluate and score your essay.
- **Chapter 6**—examines how to make the changes that are needed to the essay.
- **Chapter 7**—gives you several practice topics prior to the Simulated Tests.

SIMULATED TESTS SECTION

The second main part of this workbook consists of two Simulated GED Writing Skills Part II Tests. Each Simulated Test has one essay just as the GED Test does. The Simulated Tests can help you decide if you are ready to take the GED Writing Skills Test, Part II.

To get the most benefit from the Simulated Tests Section, take each test under the same time restrictions as for the actual GED Test. Take no more than 45 minutes to complete the essay. Space the two examinations apart by at least a week.

ANSWERS

The answer section gives you the answers to the practice exercises and provides sample essays for the Practice GED Tests chapter.

Analysis of Performance

After each Simulated Test, an Analysis of Performance Chart will help you determine if you are ready to take the Writing Skills, Part II Test. The chart enables you to evaluate your own essay. Page references are given where you can go for further study on writing each part of the essay.

Correlation Chart

The following chart shows how the sections of this exercise book relate to sections of other Steck-Vaughn GED preparation books. You can refer to these other two books for further instruction or review.

CONTENT AREAS	Chapter 1 What Is the GED Essay?	Chapter 2 Planning Your Essay	Chapter 3 Organizing Your Essay	Chapter 4 Writing Your Essay	Chapter 5 Evaluating Your Essay	Chapter 6 Revising Your Essay	Chapter 7 Practice GED Tests
BOOK TITLES							
Steck-Vaughn GED Exercise Book: Writing Skills, Part Two	p. 6–25	p. 26–37	p. 38–51	p. 52–73	p. 74–103	p. 104–113	p. 114–115
Steck-Vaughn GED Writing Sample	p. 5	p. 8–23	p. 24–40	p. 41–67	p. 68–78	p. 68–78	p. 82–86
Steck-Vaughn GED Comprehensive Review Book	p. 548	p. 550–553	p. 554–559	p. 560–566	p. 567–571	p. 567–571	p. 572–574

THE POWER WRITING PROGRAM

By helping you focus on passing the GED Writing Skills Test, Part II and by giving you a step-by-step approach to writing a good composition, this book gives you the POWER to succeed. In fact, we call our program the POWER Program. Each step—from how to begin your essay to how to end it—is listed for you. P stands for PLAN, O for ORGANIZE, W for WRITE, E for EVALUATE, and R for REVISE. Read the chart that follows. It summarizes the POWER Writing Program.

POWER STEPS

	Chapter	Steps	Time
P	Planning Your Essay p. 26–37	<input type="checkbox"/> Step 1 Read the topic assignment. Write the main idea. <input type="checkbox"/> Step 2 Make your list of ideas.	10 minutes
O	Organizing Your Essay p. 38–51	<input type="checkbox"/> Step 3 Group and name your ideas. <input type="checkbox"/> Step 4 Expand your groups. Put your groups in order.	10 minutes
W	Writing Your Essay p. 52–73	<input type="checkbox"/> Step 5 Write your introduction. <input type="checkbox"/> Step 6 Write your body paragraphs. <input type="checkbox"/> Step 7 Write your conclusion.	15 minutes
E	Evaluating Your Essay p. 74–103	<input type="checkbox"/> Step 8 Evaluate your essay.	5 minutes
R	Revising Your Essay p. 104–113	<input type="checkbox"/> Step 9 Make the changes that are needed.	5 minutes

Study the POWER Steps until they come easily to you. If you can do that, you are well on your way to being prepared for the GED essay. Practice the POWER Steps until they become automatic. Just as with any other skill, the only way to become good at writing is to practice. You will become a good writer more quickly if you practice in a systematic way.

How To Use Your 45 Minutes

Once you are comfortable with the POWER writing process, you need to consider one more thing. You will be allowed only 45 minutes to write your essay. So it is important to practice writing with that time limit in mind.

The time chart below suggests how to divide the time you spend on each step.

45 POWER Minutes	
Planning:	10 minutes
Organizing:	10 minutes
Writing:	15 minutes
Evaluating:	5 minutes
Revising:	5 minutes

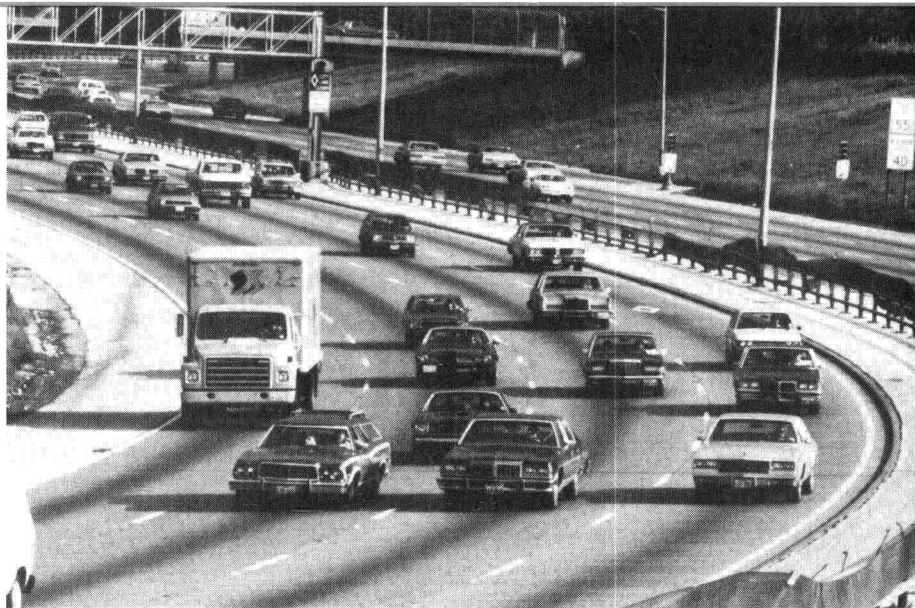
Notice that in this chart, 20 minutes out of the total 45 minutes is spent planning and organizing. You may find yourself spending less time on one step and more time on another. But keep in mind the importance of planning and organizing. Now turn to page 6 to learn more about the GED essay.

UNIT 1

PRACTICE EXERCISES

Chapter 1

What Is the GED Essay?



Refer to this picture as you read the sample topic on page 8.

	Chapter	Steps	Time
P O W E R	Planning Your Essay p. 26–37	<input type="checkbox"/> Step 1 Read the topic assignment. Write the main idea. <input type="checkbox"/> Step 2 Make your list of ideas.	10 minutes
	Organizing Your Essay p. 38–51	<input type="checkbox"/> Step 3 Group and name your ideas. <input type="checkbox"/> Step 4 Expand your groups. Put your groups in order.	10 minutes
	Writing Your Essay p. 52–73	<input type="checkbox"/> Step 5 Write your introduction. <input type="checkbox"/> Step 6 Write your body paragraphs. <input type="checkbox"/> Step 7 Write your conclusion.	15 minutes
	Evaluating Your Essay p. 74–103	<input type="checkbox"/> Step 8 Evaluate your essay.	5 minutes
	Revising Your Essay p. 104–113	<input type="checkbox"/> Step 9 Make the changes that are needed.	5 minutes

Background Information

An **essay** is a brief composition that gives the writer's views on a particular topic. An essay includes more than one paragraph. A paragraph is a series of sentences which develop one main idea or topic. The essay includes an introductory paragraph, one or more body paragraphs, and a conclusion paragraph.

As you can see in the chart on page 2, the essay is the second part of the Writing Skills Test. Your ability to write effectively will be directly measured by the essay.

What Is the Content of the Essay?

The essay topic assignment will be brief. You will be asked to “state a view” or “present an opinion” or “explain why or how” about an issue or situation familiar to adults. You will be expected to write a composition that clearly explains and defends your point of view. You will not need any specialized knowledge or information to respond to the topic. A typical topic assignment, for example, might ask you to describe the effects of the automobile on modern life.

You will be allowed 45 minutes to complete Part II of the Writing Skills Test.

A sample essay topic is on page 8. Seven sample student essays written in response to the topic are on pages 10–23.

What Does the Test Look Like?

The directions for the essay test tell you the steps to take to prepare your answer. An example of the directions that accompany the essay topic is on page 8.

How Will Your Essay Be Scored?

Your composition will be scored “holistically.” This means that your composition will be judged on its overall effectiveness. If you make a few misspellings or a few usage errors, this will not cause your composition to get a failing score, although too many of each might. What is most important is how well you stick to the topic and how well you support your topic with good examples.

Two different people will score your essay. Each scorer will read your essay and decide how effective it is based on its organization, support, and control of the English language. Each scorer will use the GED Essay Scoring Guide (see page 9) and assign your essay a score ranging from zero to six. The two scores are then added, resulting in a range of scores from zero to twelve. A third scorer can be used if the first two scores are more than one point apart.

The scores earned on Part I and Part II of the Writing Skills Test will be combined and reported as a single score on a standard score scale.

The GED Essay Scoring Guide is found on page 9, preceding the student essays. Commentary on explaining the scoring of the seven sample essays is found on page 24.

What Is a Passing Score on the GED?

Contact your local GED testing center to find out what score you need in order to pass the test. Each state has its own minimum score requirements for issuing high school equivalency credentials.

□ Sample GED Essay Test

This is what the GED Essay Test looks like. You will see a page similar to this when you take the essay portion of the GED Writing Skills Test.

SAMPLE GED ESSAY TEST

Tests of General Educational Development Writing Skills, Part Two

Instructions

This is a test to find out how well you write. The test has one question which asks you to present an opinion on an issue or to explain something. In preparing your answer for this question, you should take the following steps:

1. Read all of the information accompanying the question.
2. Plan your answer carefully before you write.
3. Use the blank pages of this test booklet (or scratch paper) to make any notes.
4. Write your answer on the separate answer sheet.
5. Read carefully what you have written and make any changes that will improve your writing.
6. Check your paragraphing, sentence structure, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and usage, and make any necessary corrections.

You will have 45 minutes to write on the question you are assigned. Write legibly and use a ballpoint pen so that the evaluators will be able to read your writing. The notes you make on the blank pages (scratch paper) will not be scored.

Your composition will be scored by at least two trained evaluators who will judge the paper according to its overall effectiveness. They will be concerned with how clearly you make the main point of your composition, how thoroughly you support your ideas, and how clear and correct your writing is throughout the composition. You will receive no credit for writing on a question other than the one assigned.

SAMPLE TOPIC

The automobile has certainly been responsible for many changes in the United States. Some of these changes have improved our lives and some have made life more difficult or unpleasant.

Write a composition of about 200 words describing the effect of the automobile on modern life. You may describe the positive effects, the negative effects, or both. Be specific, and use examples to support your view.

Refer to the steps on the directions page for more specific instructions about writing your composition.

All topics used with GED examinees during the studies remain secure test questions (for possible use in 1988) which cannot yet be published, nor can the examinees' responses. However, we are able to provide the example topic above, which was used with a national sample of high school seniors. The responses printed below were written by high school seniors; the scoring scale used to score the papers is the same as that used to score GED examinees' papers. The GED Essay Scoring Guide follows the samples, along with the actual scores awarded the papers.

□ GED Essay Scoring Guide

This is the guide that scorers use to evaluate each GED essay. All scores for the sample essays that follow on pages 10–23 were based on the GED Essay Scoring Guide.

GED Essay Scoring Guide

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Papers will show *some or all* of the following characteristics.

Upper-half papers make clear a definite purpose, pursued with varying degrees of effectiveness. They also have a structure that shows evidence of some deliberate planning. The writer's control of English usage ranges from fairly reliable at 4 to confident and accomplished at 6.

- 6 Papers scored as a 6 tend to offer sophisticated ideas within an organizational framework that is clear and appropriate for the topic. The supporting statements are particularly effective because of their substance, specificity, or illustrative quality. The writing is vivid and precise, though it may contain an occasional flaw.
- 5 Papers scored as a 5 are clearly organized with effective support for each of the writer's major points. The writing offers substantive ideas, though the paper may lack the flair or grace of a 6 paper. The surface features are consistently under control, despite an occasional lapse in usage.
- 4 Papers scored as a 4 show evidence of the writer's organizational plan. Support, though sufficient, tends to be less extensive or convincing than that found in papers scored as a 5 or 6. The writer generally observes the conventions of accepted English usage. Some errors are usually present, but they are not severe enough to interfere significantly with the writer's main purpose.

Lower-half papers either fail to convey a purpose sufficiently or lack one entirely. Consequently, their structure ranges from rudimentary at 3, to random at 2, to absent at 1. Control of the conventions of English usage tends to follow this same gradient.

- 3 Papers scored as a 3 usually show some evidence of planning or development. However, the organization is often limited to a simple listing or haphazard recitation of ideas about the topic, leaving an impression of insufficiency. The 3 papers often demonstrate repeated weaknesses in accepted English usage and are generally ineffective in accomplishing the writer's purpose.
- 2 Papers scored as a 2 are characterized by a marked lack of development or inadequate support for ideas. The level of thought apparent in the writing is frequently unsophisticated or superficial, often marked by a listing of unsupported generalizations. Instead of suggesting a clear purpose, these papers often present conflicting purposes. Errors in accepted English usage may seriously interfere with the overall effectiveness of these papers.
- 1 Papers scored as a 1 leave the impression that the writer has not only *not* accomplished a purpose, but has not made any purpose apparent. The dominant feature of these papers is the lack of control. The writer stumbles both in conveying a clear plan for the paper and in expressing ideas according to the conventions of accepted English usage.
- 0 The zero score is reserved for papers which are blank, illegible, or written on a topic other than the one assigned.

□ Sample Essays

Essay 1

Use the GED Essay Scoring Guide on page 9 to assign this essay a score between zero and six.

○ 0 ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6

~~The invention of the automobile has certainly done more good for more people~~

The good that the invention of the automobile has done for the world, in terms of convenience, time and labor, certainly outweighs the problems it has caused. The ^{invention} ~~discovery~~ of the automobile has created a tremendous job market in the united states and other auto manufacturing countries. What's more, ~~it uses~~ the need for fuel to operate all the cars, trucks, and motorcycles on the road today has helped to ~~create~~ create thriving, modern countries where backward & thind-world countries were once predominate.

On a smaller scale, the automobile has tremendously benefited such people as farmers, who can transport goods much quicker today than just a century ago. Productivity in a variety of businesses has increased because important materials and information can be delivered in hours where it used to take days or

weeks. Moreover, treatment of the sick or injured is now more efficient because necessary machinery or medicines can be rapidly obtained, not to mention the fact that patients themselves can be transported to hospitals much more quickly; A ~~tremendous~~ great benefit where time can be the difference between life or death.

Even With all the ~~good~~ services that automobiles provide, there are still some major drawbacks. Some of these, like accidents due to faulty construction, are being slowly but surely removed as science and technology advances. Others, such as drunk driving, may never be eliminated, but their frequencies can certainly be lessened as public awareness and outcry increase.

There are other problems, too; how automobiles affect the ecology of our planet, dense traffic, increasing hazards due to increasing driver population, to name a few. All of these however, ~~do not~~ ~~not~~ are not reasons to oppose ~~the~~ automobile production. As described, automobiles are not only beneficial but necessary to today's world. These problems will just have to be dealt with in time.

Essay 2

Use the GED Essay Scoring Guide on page 9 to assign this essay a score between zero and six.

☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6

The modern day automobile has several affects, ~~on our civilization~~, both positive and negative, on our civilization. On a positive viewpoint, the automobile can be considered essential to our lifestyle. Today's world is much more fast-moving than before. People have deadlines to meet, and, without the use of the automobile, it would be difficult to uphold these obligations. Also, the transportation of goods makes the automobile necessary. For example, if a company were to ship its goods over a ~~15~~ fifteen mile distance, it would be much more economical to use ~~a~~ a truck rather than a train or plane. The automobile also gives its owner a sence of freedom. If an owner of an automobile has a weekend off, for instance, he can ~~take~~ that short ~~trip for the~~ vacation he would not have had if he did not have an automobile. In these ways, the automobile tends to ~~be~~ serve ~~the~~ civilization well. It does, however, have its drawbacks.

The automobile has caused ~~several~~ problems in today's society. It has ~~caused~~ unquestionably added to the problem of ~~a~~ pollution. The exhaust of an automobile has increased the problem of air pollution considerably. The installation of catalytic converters and the installation of emission controls has lessened the problem, but has by no means solved it. Noise pollution is another situation to be ~~a~~ recognized. A crowded free-way during rush hour can be very

disturbing to any nearby residents. I have seen no solution to this problem, for, while ~~you~~ it is possible to make an engine quieter, it is impossible to keep a motorist from blowing his horn. Traffic fatalities must also be considered. ~~Any lowering~~ Lowering the national speed-limit to 55 miles per hour has helped, but again, this has not solved the problem. By reviewing these arguments, the automobile may be considered a hazard to modern day civilization.

All in all, while the automobile has aided our modern world in many ways, it still has its drawbacks. If these drawbacks can be ironed out, the automobile may be considered a tremendous asset by any standards.

— JH

Essay 3

Use the GED Essay Scoring Guide on page 9 to assign this essay a score between zero and six.

○
0

○
1

○
2

○
3

○
4

○
5

○
6

The automobile has meant a great deal to the de-centralization of the American family. The increased transportation possibilities have ~~caused~~ the tradition of an entire family living in the same area to end, for now ~~there~~ it is very easy to leave. Therefore, ~~modern society is~~ people in modern society are much more independent and self-reliant.

Another effect the automobile has had on modern society is seen in the teenage culture. To most teens, a car means freedom and a chance to do things on their own, away from their parents. Increased social activity is available once a teen receives his license.

This means that kids are growing up even faster than before.

Finally, although the widespread use of the auto has meant the spreading out of the family, it also means that it is easier for them to travel to reach each other. It has brought together people who might have otherwise never been able to see each other.