

**CLIFFS**

# GED

**SOCIAL  
STUDIES  
PREPARATION  
GUIDE**

## THE SOCIAL STUDIES TEST

The New High School Equivalency Examination

By Stephen Fisher, M.A.

Series Editor: Jerry Bobrow, M.A.

Written by testing experts

New GED question types

Intensive social studies reviews

Two full-length practice tests

Complete answers and explanations

Glossaries of key terms

**Cliffs**

**NOTES**

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# GED Social Studies Test

## PREPARATION GUIDE

The New High School  
Equivalency Examination

by

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**Cliffs Notes**

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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, suggested approaches with samples, and additional tips.
- PART III:** Assessment—a half-length Mini-Test to assess your strengths and weaknesses.
- PART IV:** Subject Area Reviews—intensive reviews of the important areas (U.S. history, political science-government, the behavioral sciences, economics, and global geography), including an introduction on how to review and a 550-word glossary.
- 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 31.
- \_\_\_ 7. Check your answers and analyze your results, page 45.
- \_\_\_ 8. Fill out the Tally Sheet for Questions Missed to pinpoint your mistakes, page 48.
- \_\_\_ 9. Read How to Review, page 59.
- \_\_\_ 10. Review the Area Review Outlines, starting on page 60.
- \_\_\_ 11. Go over Subject Area Glossaries, starting on page 98.
- \_\_\_ 12. Strictly observing time allotments, take Practice Test 1, starting on page 131.
- \_\_\_ 13. Check your answers and analyze your Practice Test 1 results, page 153.
- \_\_\_ 14. Fill out the Tally Sheet for Questions Missed to pinpoint your mistakes, page 156.
- \_\_\_ 15. While referring to each item of Practice Test 1, study ALL the Answers and Explanations that begin on page 157.
- \_\_\_ 16. Review weak areas as necessary.
- \_\_\_ 17. Strictly observing time allotments, take Practice Test 2, starting on page 173.
- \_\_\_ 18. Check your answers and analyze your Practice Test 2 results, page 196.
- \_\_\_ 19. Fill out the Tally Sheet for Questions Missed to pinpoint your mistakes, page 199.
- \_\_\_ 20. While referring to each item of Practice Test 2, study ALL the Answers and Explanations that begin on page 200.
- \_\_\_ 21. Review weak areas.
- \_\_\_ 22. Review How to Take the Test, starting on page 9.
- \_\_\_ 23. Carefully read Final Preparation: "The Final Touches," page 215.

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# FORMAT OF THE NEW GED SOCIAL STUDIES TEST

## PART I: Introduction

Time: 30 minutes (Total Questions: 60)

One item referring to graphs, charts, tables, bar charts, or pictures. . . . . about 40 Questions

General knowledge questions that stand alone, without stimulus material. . . . . about 20 Questions

## CONTENT AREAS

U.S. History	11%—about 11 Questions
Political Science-Government	24%—about 14 Questions
Behavioral Sciences	20%—about 12 Questions
Economics	20%—about 12 Questions
Global Geography	15%—about 9 Questions

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The GED Social Studies Test (30 minutes) contains entirely of multiple-choice questions. The test contains 60 questions that are of two basic types: those referring to graphs, charts, tables, diagrams, or pictures (about 40 questions) and general knowledge questions that stand alone (about 20 questions). The areas covered are U.S. history, political science-government, behavioral sciences, economics, and global geography. Each part is represented by about the same number of questions, with only a few more questions on U.S. history and a few less questions on global geography. The test is scored from 10 to 80 with all questions being of equal value.





## FORMAT OF THE NEW GED SOCIAL STUDIES TEST

Time: 90 Minutes

Total Questions: 60

Questions referring to graphs, charts, tables,  
narrations, or pictures —about 40 Questions

General knowledge questions that stand alone,  
without stimulus material —about 20 Questions

## CONTENT AREAS

U.S. History	25%—about 15 Questions
Political Science-Government	20%—about 12 Questions
Behavioral Sciences	20%—about 12 Questions
Economics	20%—about 12 Questions
Global Geography	15%—about 9 Questions

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The GED Social Studies Test lasts 1½ hours (90 minutes) and consists entirely of multiple-choice questions. The test contains 60 questions that are of two basic types: those referring to graphs, charts, tables, narrations, or pictures (about 40 questions) and general knowledge questions that stand alone (about 20 questions). The areas covered are U.S. history, political science-government, behavioral sciences, economics, and global geography. Each area is represented by about the same number of questions, with only a few more questions on U.S. history and a few less questions on global geography. 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:** 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:** Are there any special editions of the GED?

**A:** Yes! In addition to 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:** 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 Social Studies Test.

## PART II: Analysis of Exam Areas

This section is designed to introduce you to the GED Social Studies Test by carefully reviewing the

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

The emphasis in this section is on test-taking strategies and techniques.

### Directions

The content of the Social Studies Test contains 30 multiple-choice questions and is 15 minutes long. The questions are taken from creative maps, maps, treaties, laws, laws, and political cartoons. The majority of the questions in the test are "multiple-choice questions" (i.e., you choose one of four or more choices based on the given facts, map, etc.). It is important to note that only the questions are based on the historical social studies. The ability to use your own knowledge and ability to read and understand the Social Studies Test.





## HOW TO TAKE THE TEST

The current Social Studies Test is 1½ hours in length and contains 60 questions.

### *Ability Tested and Content*

The Social Studies Test evaluates your ability to understand various concepts, ideas, and problems associated with social studies. The test is comprised of the following content areas:

**U.S. History:** Emphasis is on the development of the United States from the colonial period to America's role as a world power; current U.S. social and political problems are included in this section of the test.

**Political Science-Government:** Emphasis is on the American political system, the development and importance of American political parties, constitutional law, and state and local government; current U.S. political problems are included in this section of the test.

**Behavioral Sciences (psychology, sociology, anthropology):** Emphasis is on the cultural development of mankind; specific cultural problems as well as the basic processes involved in learning, socialization, values, attitudes, etc., are included in this section.

**Economics:** Emphasis is on economic organization, concepts of modern capitalism, economic indicators, the world economy, and current economic problems.

**Global Geography:** Emphasis is on major geographic regions, distribution of the world's population, environmental pollution, maps and globes, and the relationship of natural resources to land use.

### *Directions*

The current GED Social Studies Test contains 60 multiple-choice questions and is 1½ hours in length. The questions are taken from graphs, charts, maps, tables, narrations, and political cartoons. The majority of the questions in the test are "multiple-set questions" based on a single stimulus (two or more questions based on the same graph, narration, etc.). It is important to note that relatively few questions are based on specific historical recall. Rather, the ability to *use generalizations* and *draw conclusions* based on general historical knowledge and concepts is the key to successfully completing the Social Studies Test.

In taking the test, mark only *one answer* for each question. There is *no penalty* for guessing, so be sure to mark an answer for each question!

### **Basic Skills Necessary**

The basic skills necessary to be successful on this test include:

1. A high school level understanding of the various social sciences included in the test.
2. The ability to draw conclusions based on various materials (charts, graphs, tables, narrations, maps, political cartoons).
3. The ability to understand concepts (ideas) associated with the following skill areas. NOTE: The sequence of the skill areas is one of graduated difficulty from simplest to most difficult.

**Knowledge:** Questions based on knowledge test a basic understanding of a particular idea or event.

**Comprehension/Interpretation:** Questions based on comprehension and interpretation test the ability to understand (interpret) ideas that are presented in short narrations.

**Inference:** Questions based on inference test the ability to draw conclusions and infer information from the specific material presented in the question.

**Application:** Questions based on application test the ability to understand a term or idea and then transfer the content knowledge of that term to a specific situation.

**Evaluation:** Questions based on evaluation test the ability to determine both the consistency or inconsistency of statements associated with a specific question, as well as the ability to determine attitudes and opinions associated with the question.

### **Analysis of Directions**

Make sure you understand what the question is asking for; for example, "All of the following *except* . . ."; "Which of the following is *consistent* (or inconsistent) with the passage?"; "It can be *inferred* from the chart . . ."; "The one *factor* that contributed to . . ."; or "The economy of the South was *based on* . . ."

The information needed to answer the questions is often contained in the various test materials. Remember, extensive background knowledge is not a prerequisite for answering the test questions; refer back to specific test material as often as necessary to answer the question.