How to Prepare for the SOCIAL STUDIES TEST Section of the NEW HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY EXAMINATION

2nd Edition

JACOB IRGANG
WILLIAM YOUNG

-HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE-

SOCIAL STUDIES TEST SECTION

OF THE

NEW

HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY EXAMINATION

Second Edition

Jacob Irgang
Department of Social Studies
Stuyvesant High School
New York, New York

William Young
Head of the Reference Department
University Libraries
State University of New York
Albany, New York

GED PROJECT EDITORS

Cliff Jenkins

Program Consultant Career Preparation Center San Mateo County Office of Education Daly City, California Theodore Silveira and David Reynolds

Instructors ration Center

Career Preparation Center
San Mateo County Office of Education
Daly City, California

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TO THE TEACHER -

We have tried to develop the best GED series possible and to do it in such a way that an average student can work through the book unaided. A book, however, is never a substitute for high quality instruction in basic skill areas, so rather than attempting a definitive textbook, we have created something we feel will be more valuable to the GED teacher — a series of books aimed specifically at GED test preparation. We have tried to eliminate material that is extraneous to the GED tests or that is better handled by a basic skills instructor. Because we realize that it is impossible to create a series that would suit every teacher's style, we have concentrated on making these books as complete and versatile as possible, so that they can be adapted to a wide variety of teaching methods and situations.

The pretest and posttest have been designed to reflect the actual GED test in length, difficulty, and composition. We suggest that you administer these tests to the students under conditions as similar as possible to those that prevail in the local testing center. If there is no time limit at the testing center, do not impose one on the students. If there is a time limit, the students must learn to work within that restriction. Practice under simulated test conditions will be invaluable to the students, as every bit of experience in multiple-choice test taking can mean extra points for students without recent formal schooling.

In general, we have found that it works best for the students to take the three reading tests first. The students who have trouble with these tests are likely to have even more trouble with the math and writing skills tests. If they begin with one of the more difficult tests, they will need a great deal of time to prepare before taking their first tests and can easily become bored and discouraged. The students who do well on the reading tests, on the other hand, will find themselves three-fifths of the way to their GEDs and will be riding a wave of confidence as they face the math and writing skills tests.

The weakness identification keys are an important part of this GED series. Use these keys, and teach the students to use them; they will tell you in what areas the students need the most work. If a student continues to have trouble with a certain type of question, use the answer keys (which have the questions labeled according to type) to select a number of questions of that same type and give them to the student to do all together. Often, after this sort of concentrated work, the student will begin to recognize that particular type of question and the skills it requires. Again, anything that the students learn about the nature of multiple-choice tests will prove invaluable.

We suggest taking one or two favorite passages from each section of the reading test books and working them into complete lessons in which you demonstrate at length how to analyze the question, how to eliminate the wrong answers, and how to find the correct answer. Often, students who do not initially score well on reading passage tests will improve once they have been shown how to arrive at the answers. They simply have had no experience with the process.

TO THE STUDENT

We have designed this book so that a person of average ability can work through it unaided and prepare to pass the GED tests. It is a test preparation book, not a textbook. Its aim is to review the skills you will need to pass the General Educational Development (GED) tests and to introduce you to GED-type tests. A book is never a substitute for good instruction in basic skills, so if you have a great deal of trouble understanding the material presented here, you will probably want to seek out a qualified GED teacher through your local adult school or GED test center. In any event, you will need to work carefully and completely through the material presented to give yourself the best chance of passing your tests at a high level.

The pretest and posttest are as much like the real GED in length, variety, and difficulty as we could make them. We suggest that you contact your local GED testing center to find out the real conditions under which you will take the tests. Then take the pretest and posttest under the same conditions. If there is no time limit at the test center, do not impose one on yourself. If there is a time limit, you should stick to it. Every bit of experience you get in taking multiple-choice exams under real test conditions can mean extra confidence and extra points when you take the GED.

The weakness identification keys are an important part of this GED series. Learn to use them and use them consistently. They will tell you where your strengths are and where you need the most work. If you find you are having trouble with one particular type of question, learn to look for that type and to approach it with extra effort. We have provided explanations along with all of the answers in the book and have labeled each one to show what type of question you were asked. If you have trouble with many inference questions, for example, you can have a friend check the answer key and select several questions of that type for you to do in a group. After a few practice sessions of this sort, you should begin to recognize that type of question when you see it.

Do not rush through the book. You will learn more by doing a few passages carefully, by checking the answer key, and by reviewing the passage until you understand why the right answer is right, than you will by simply doing one passage after another without thinking about what you are doing. To learn, you must make the effort to understand.

We recommend that you take the three reading tests (social studies, science, and reading) first. The skills required are practically the same for all three tests. Once you have passed one of these tests, you can usually get through the other two in short order. Then you will find yourself three-fifths of the way to your GED, with only the writing skills and math tests to go.

ABOUT THE EXAMINATION

The high school equivalency examination (GED) is made up of five individual tests. Recently the examination was changed to present more relevant material, and much of the question material deals with more contemporary themes than it had in the past. The five parts of the examination are:

- 1. The writing skills test
- 2. The social studies test
- 3. The science test
- 4. The reading skills test
- 5. The mathematics test

Examinations are given throughout the year at local test centers. In order to evaluate your chances for passing, you should know the following:

- 1. To pass each individual test you must have a standard score of 35.
- 2. If you receive a score below 35 in any subject, you must take that exam over again.
- 3. Although passing grade for each exam is 35, you must achieve a total score of 225 to pass the entire high school equivalency examination. This means that you must have higher scores in some areas in order to raise the total score. If you receive at least 45 in each test, you will pass.
- 4. If you pass each portion but fail to achieve a passing score of 225, you may take any of the exams over again in order to raise your average.
- 5. If you score lower when you retake the exam, you will be credited for the higher score you originally received. Thus, it may make sense to take the entire exam over again, since you will not lose points.

The format of each examination may vary from test to test. Although there will be the same number of questions on an exam, the weighting or balance of questions may vary. We have tried to present a variety of formats whenever possible. But the basic principles of test taking remain the same.

Regardless of the balance of questions, the approach to test questions will be consistent. You must understand how to read paragraphs and interpret the material in order to answer questions about the readings. Some tests will demand a prior knowledge of the subject matter, such as the content questions in the science and social studies exams. This information comes from reading books, magazines, and newspapers or watching television and listening to the radio. In the writing and mathematics tests you must learn specific material in order to answer the questions.

The test is not an easy one. However, if you learn to follow instructions, and study carefully and comprehensively, the examination should not be that difficult. It is equivalent to the final exams given in high school.

If you pass this examination, you should feel proud of yourself. You have opened a doorway to a new future. Good luck!

INTRODUCTION-

The purpose of this book is to help you prepare for the social studies test, the second of the five subject areas which make up the GED examination (high school equivalency examination). You will be expected to be familiar with the content and skills required of a student taking three and a half years of social studies in a regular high school.

The scope of the examination is very broad. The following is a breakdown of what will be covered in this book, as well as on the examination. The percentage indicated is the weighting presented on the exam.

Economics (20%). Economic concepts such as supply and demand, monopoly, productivity, taxes, capital, investment, labor unions, collective bargaining, and division of labor will be emphasized.

The section on economics will also include interdisciplinary social science concepts such as compromise and adjustment, comparative and absolute advantage, scarcity, saving, input and output, and mixed or modified market economy.

Practical emphasis on consumer economics and economic concepts is related to the interpretation of current events and the conduct of personal and business affairs.

Geography (15%). This portion of the examination will emphasize such geographic concepts as areal and spatial association, climate, population density, site, and population distribution.

Ecological concepts, such as nature-people relationships and conservation of natural resources, will also be emphasized.

Political science (20%). This section will be concerned with government, including history and structure of local, state, and federal governments. Topics related to international politics, constitutional law, comparative government, and public administration will be discussed.

Such political science concepts as national sovereignty, justice, community of nations, consent of the governed, and social control will also be stressed.

History (25%). This will include the overall historical development of the United States and relationships of the United States with Latin American and other political entities. Emphasis is placed on tracing current political, economic, and social phenomena to current historical development.

Interdisciplinary social science concepts such as industrialization-urbanization, power, morality and choice, compromise and adjustment, and freedom and equality will also be emphasized.

Behavioral science (20%).

- 1. Sociological concepts, including values, norms, social institutions, position, role, ethnic groups, and social class.
- 2. Anthropological concepts, including social systems, culture, needs, evolution of culture, and social structure.
- 3. Social psychological concepts, including prejudice, role behavior, personality, status, and relationship.

Also included are topics from fields other than social studies but related to behavioral science through family living, home economics, minority group studies, human relations, and counseling.

In addition to the given information above, the social studies test is strongly oriented to data interpretation items which include cartoons and pictures.

In this book, designed for review of social studies and for preparation for social studies exams, the material is presented in two sections within each subject chapter. The first part involves knowledge or concept questions. The second involves readings. All material is answered and explained.

Following are the reading comprehension skills required in this book:

- Finding the main idea
- Locating subordinate ideas
- Making inferences
- Applying ideas
- Interpreting charts and graphs

What are these skills? How do you apply them to your social studies reading? Let's analyze each skill.

Finding the Main Idea. When the question asks you to find the main idea of a passage, it is actually asking you, "What is this passage about?" Normally, you will find the main idea, or a clue to it, in the first sentence of a paragraph in the passage. For example, if a passage was entitled HOW TO BUY A HOME, you would in the passage have little trouble identifying the main idea. You would then read the paragraphs and try to find out how to buy a home. Other examples of main ideas might be:

- 1. TEST-TUBE BABIES
- 2. FINDING AN ANSWER FOR STREET CRIME
- 3. CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING
- 4. ANALYZING POETRY

In the above cases, you have been given the main idea in the title. But suppose there was no title. You would then have to look elsewhere for your clues. Let's look at a short paragraph.

It is necessary to learn how to delegate and divide work and responsibility to avoid becoming swamped in a lot of detail. Unless you assign each employee certain definite tasks and responsibilities, you are likely to find that the work will not be done efficiently, mistakes will occur; promises will not be kept, and you will begin to lose customers.

What do you think the main idea is in this paragraph? You should have said, "It is important to delegate work and responsibility." The very first sentence states the main idea. Simple? Of course. But now let's try another one.

No one plan or arrangement for a garden can suit all conditions. Each gardener must plan to meet his or her own problem. Careful planning will lessen the work of gardening and increase the returns from the work. Planting seeds and plants at random usually results in waste and disappointment. Suggestions for planning a garden are presented here with the idea that they can be changed to suit the individual gardener.

The main idea in this paragraph is a little further along. Here it appears several sentences away from the first. What did you select? Did you say, "Planning a garden"? If you did, you would be correct.

What you should always keep in mind, as you go through this book, is that it does not matter what kind of reading you are doing—science, social studies, general reading, or even poetry. You can analyze the paragraph in the same way as the above samples. Read through the paragraph quickly and try to understand the general idea of the selection. State your general idea out loud to yourself. Does it sound correct? If someone asked you what you read, would you be able to put a title to it? If so, then you have found the main idea.

Locating Subordinate Ideas. Subordinate ideas are those ideas that support the main idea. Each paragraph usually has more than one idea that builds upon the main idea and helps to develop it into something that makes sense. These subordinate ideas may be presented in different ways throughout the paragraph. Sometimes they may be cause-and-effect ideas, comparisons or contrasts, and even sequences. Let's look at a typical cause-and-effect type question from the following selections.

Magma is rocky material at high temperatures. It is made up of silicates, water, and gases. At depths down in the Earth's crust, the great pressures prevent the hot, solid magma from liquefying. As the Earth's crust moves, pressure may increase and a weakness may appear in the overlying rock layers. The pressure is reduced at these points and the magma liquefies. The hot, liquid rock flows into the newly formed cracks. In some places, the liquid magma reaches the surface and solidifies.

It should be easy to determine what the paragraph is talking about. It is discussing magma, which is rocky material at high temperatures. That was simple, if you started reading from the beginning. But what causes magma? How is it created? The answer would be reduced pressure and high temperature.

But the questions you will find in this book will not be that direct. Instead, you will find a question like this.

- 1. Which factor(s) will most likely cause magma to liquefy?
 - (1) lateral movement
 - (2) high temperature, low pressure
 - (3) high temperature, high pressure
 - (4) low temperature, low pressure
 - (5) low temperature, high pressure

You already know that the correct answer is (2). But you must familiarize yourself with the style of the questions.

Move on to the next selection.

One of the exciting dishes anyone can make is Chinese deep-fried shrimp. Be sure to purchase only the freshest shrimp. It is often possible to evaluate the quality of the seafood by the way the fish store is kept. If it is

a neat, fresh-smelling store, the odds are that the fish will also be fresh. Once you have brought home your selection, mix the cleaned shrimp with the marinade and let it stand for one hour. Then drain the shrimp well. Heat a large wok with the oil for deep-frying until the oil is medium hot. Deep fry the shrimp, stirring gently to separate, and remove when golden brown.

- 1. When preparing fried shrimp, one of the steps in the preparation is to
 - (1) go to a fresh-smelling store
 - (2) serve in a warm platter
 - (3) drain the shrimp well
 - (4) buy only jumbo shrimp
 - (5) use hydrogenated cooking oil

This is an example of the main idea—which is how to prepare fried shrimp—supported by a sequential event. Thus, the correct answer is (3). That is the only selection that is actually part of the step-by-step procedure for preparing the shrimp. Going to a fresh-smelling store is not part of the preparation of the food, only the purchasing. Choices (2), (4), and (5) are not even mentioned in the paragraph.

Photography has finally come of age as a result of the sophistication of equipment. Consider the early photographer lugging his thirty-pound, glass-plate camera on his back, equipped with an additional suitcase filled with chemicals. Then years later, as cameras grew smaller and easier to handle, there were still exploding platforms of flash powder. Thus was born the electronic flash. And now, cameras are run by microcomputers that open the lens, determine the exposure, and even focus the camera. A new world has been opened for the photographer.

- 1. How does modern photography differ from the early years of this profession?
 - (1) cameras are less expensive
 - (2) equipment is more sophisticated
 - (3) the subject had to sit for long periods of time
 - (4) there are more Japanese cameras available
 - (5) photography is now considered an art form

The correct answer is (2). The contrast of the "dark ages" of photography with the electronic, microcomputerized methods available today gives support to the main idea, that photography has finally come of age.

Remember, after you have found the main idea of a paragraph, you must look for those subordinate (supporting) ideas that help establish the main idea as valid. If you have ever read Elizabeth Barrett Browning's famous poem, you may recall how it begins: "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways."

From the first line, you know the main idea is to tell the listener that she is going to tell him how much she really loves him. That is the main idea of the poem. And then she begins to enumerate the ways. Each of the "ways" are subordinate ideas—they help support her original statement.

Making Inferences. Now you get thrown a curve. Sometimes the material you want is not stated directly in the paragraph. Thus you must make inferences. This is a skill that asks you to reach a logical conclusion by using your ability to reason. You must interpret the material by looking at words, feelings, or sounds of words. When you listen to two people speaking, you can infer that one person is angry at the other if the tone or sound of his voice is raised or sharp. That is how you make an inference. Let's look at a very simple selection.

People who smoke in public places should be fined. Those of us who are nonsmokers must suffer the smells that are imposed upon us, not to mention the risks to our health. And even though there are now laws that prohibit smoking in elevators, do you think anyone pays attention? Hardly!

- 1. The writer of the above selection would most probably be happy if
 - (1) cigarettes were made to smell better
 - (2) more people smoked pipes
 - (3) all smoking were banned
 - (4) there were special smoking cars for elevators
 - (5) public smoking laws were changed

Well, this one should not be too difficult for you. Have you felt the writer's tone? He is angry, and feels that people are inconsiderate and that even laws do not work. Thus, the only choice is (3), to ban all smoking. Then there would not be any problem.

Let's take a closer look at one of the earlier paragraphs, where you were asked to find the main idea. But here we will ask for something different.

It is necessary to learn how to delegate and divide work and responsibility to avoid becoming swamped in a lot of detail. Unless you assign each employee certain definite tasks and responsibilities, you are likely to find that the work will not be done efficiently, mistakes will occur, promises will not be kept, and you will begin to lose customers.

- 1. This paragraph is directed to
 - (1) typists
 - (2) bookkeepers
 - (3) bosses
 - (4) clerks
 - (5) salespersons

Can you do this one by yourself? It is to be hoped that you chose (3). The second sentence says, "unless you assign each employee," which implies that people work for you. You should be able to *infer* (choose by logic) that this is directed to someone who employs others.

What you are also being asked to look for is personal opinion of the writer. Does the author say, "in my opinion," "I feel," "the way I see this"? These are basic clues for you to search for. When you find them, you can then begin to evaluate the author's mood, tone, feeling. If then the question calls for an interpretation of the writer's mood, you are prepared. When the author praises what is being written about, you can infer that the author likes it.

Words too give the clue. "Bright," "sunny," "fun," "happy" are all pleasant words. "Death," "dark," "sad," "dirt" are unpleasant words. You surely could make your own list.

Applying Ideas. Once you have read the selection and understood what you have read, it becomes a simple matter to apply the ideas from the paragraph to the question asked. It asks you to make conclusions based on the material you have read.

The algae grew in thick blooms, faster than they could be eaten. They died and covered the bottom of the lake. Enormous amounts of bacteria fed on the dead plants. Bacteria used up the oxygen. The fish died and their bodies added food for more bacteria which used up more oxygen.

- 1. The fish died because of a lack of
 - (1) food
 - (2) water fleas
 - (3) algae
 - (4) oxygen
 - (5) sunlight

The correct answer is (4). Although it was not stated specifically in the reading selection, you should know that fish cannot live without sufficient oxygen in the water. Bacteria used up the oxygen. Lack of oxygen would be fatal to a fish, sooner than lack of food.

If you correctly determined the answer, you have made a judgment decision. There was no mention that the fish needed water fleas or algae to live. Sunlight was never mentioned. Thus, there were only two logical choices: food or oxygen. Normally, too, the information asked for in the question is not presented in the paragraph.

Here's one more brief example of how this works. Suppose you might read in the selection: "Psychology is the study of human and animal behavior, and deals with the mind and mental processes, feelings and desires."

- 1. According to the statement, which of the following would be an aspect of psychology?
 - (1) capitalism
 - (2) fishing
 - (3) Christianity
 - (4) hunting
 - (5) depression

Of all the choices, (5) is the correct one. Depression (although not stated directly in the paragraph) deals with feelings and mental processes, and is thus related to psychology. You have been able to apply the ideas you read in the paragraph to the question and come up with the correct answer.

Interpreting Charts and Graphs. Related to reading skills questions are questions designed to test your ability to read and interpret charts and graphs. These are vital skills in social studies. A few simple points may help you do well on this type of question.

- 1. Read the title of the chart or graph. The title may be found either on the top or the bottom of the chart or graph. It tells what the chart or graph is all about.
- 2. Study the information given in the chart or graph to see how it is used as supporting evidence for the title.
- 3. Once you have become familiar with the information, then quickly glance over the questions to see what information you are expected to pinpoint.

Regardless of the kind of reading skill question, make the answering process a three-step operation.

- 1. Identify the reading skill involved.
- 2. Make your decisions on the basis of evidence in the selection.
- 3. Find support in the selection to distinguish between the correct choice and the incorrect choices.

Remember, it does not matter what subject you are studying. The mental processes are the same for all subject areas. To help you, we will conclude the Introduction with a list of tips and skills necessary to successfully answer reading interpretation questions.

The best way to pass the test is to keep these ten tips in mind:

- 1. Read. Do a little more than you have been doing. Read a quality newspaper. Read columns, articles, and magazines on science topics.
- 2. Use this book. Read it carefully. Do all the test questions. Read it all.
- 3. Take all the practice tests as if they were real exams.
- 4. Mark the results exactly.
- 5. Go back over those questions that you answered incorrectly.

- 6. Study the reasons for your error.
- 7. Think about how you will avoid that kind of error in the future.
- 8. Regularly review the reading skills: main idea, subordinate idea, intended inference, and application of ideas.
- 9. Develop the habit of being a science detective when answering questions so that you are always on the alert for clues.
- 10. Look for clues in three places: in the paragraph, in the question, in you.

TABLE

OF

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	Introduction	vii
	PRETEST	1
	Answers and Explanations	18
ONE	ECONOMICS	23
	Basic Information	23
	Readings	39
	Answers and Explanations	49
TWO	GEOGRAPHY	55
	Basic Information	55
	Readings	64
	Answers and Explanations	73
THREE	POLITICAL SCIENCE	77
	Basic Information	77
	Readings	90
	Answers and Explanations	104
FOUR	HISTORY	111
	Basic Information	111
	Readings	129
	Answers and Explanations	148
FIVE	BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE	157
	Basic Information	157
	Readings	162
	Answers and Explanations	173
	POSTTEST	177
	Answers and Explanations	200

PRETEST

This book should help you develop certain skills in reading and understanding social studies materials. This pretest should help you evaluate the current state of those skills.

To take the pretest read each of the following passages and answer the questions that follow. Blacken the space that corresponds to the number of the answer you have chosen. Although the pretest should take about one hour and a half to finish, there is no time limit. Answer all questions on the pretest, and then check your answers in the section that follows. Read through the explanations to help understand what you might not know. Learn the types of questions that cause you trouble. And then consult the Weakness Identification Key to locate those specific problem areas.

Once you have located your weaknesses, use the rest of this book to review those sections that will help you improve your future test scores.

PASSAGE ONE: ECONOMICS -

- 1. A prominent economist has conveniently classified the five stages of economic growth which all societies, past and present, tend to pass through in their quest for economic expansion. The five stages of economic growth include: 1) traditional society; 2) preconditions for take-off; 3) take-off; 4) drive to maturity; and 5) the age of high mass consumption. There is even another stage, one which goes beyond the age of high mass consumption. The sixth stage, if any, would be referred to as "the welfare state."
- 2. The traditional society is one in which there is a ceiling on productivity. There is no effective use of technology. Labor-saving inventions are non-existent. A greater percentage of its human and natural resources are diverted to agriculture and other necessities of life.
- 3. Preconditions for take-off occur when the society begins to change its attitude toward economic growth. Some of its resources are diverted from agriculture and put to work on industrial expansion.
- 4. The take-off stage is a key one. Society has reached the point where it has been able to overcome political, social, and moral obstacles to economic expansion. This is a period when new sources of energy—coal, petroleum, and oil—are combined with technological innovation to introduce new industries. Heavy emphasis is laid on communication and transportation, as was the case with the United States, Japan, Russia, and Germany in the middle and end of the nineteenth century. The chemical and electrical industries have contributed to their phenomenal rate of economic growth.

- 5. If all goes well during the take-off stage, sixty years following the initial take-off should see the economy enter into economic maturity. Ten to twenty percent of its resources are now directed toward industry, transportation, and communication. The society has reached a point where it can generate new industries beyond what already exists in the economy. There is an eye for overseas markets to sell its goods. It is also a period of an ever-growing urban skilled and unskilled working class. A new class of production managers takes over from the giant entrepreneurs of the nineteenth century. Incomes, both money and real, begin to surge upward.
- 6. The age of high mass consumption, characteristic of the United States in the twentieth century, is identified by a bulging service-oriented economy. The art of mass production has been sufficiently mastered. Consumer goods and services take first priority. It is a period of more leisure time and early retirement. The automobile and a host of electrical appliances are the earmarks of this stage of economic growth.
- 7. Beyond the age of high mass consumption looms the welfare state. Society demands more social goods and services from the government. It is said that 20 to 25 percent of the civilian population in the United States is already employed by local, state, and federal governments. Some experts fear that the increasing intervention by government in the economy of the United States will lead to a subtle form of dictatorship. Other experts believe that the government is not doing enough to serve the welfare of its citizens. Only time will tell who is right.

1. An appropriate title for this passage would be

1. 1 2 3 4 5

- (1) The Disadvantages of Economic Growth
- (2) The Advantages of Economic Growth
- (3) The Stages of Economic Growth
- (4) The Effects of Economic Growth
- (5) The Causes for Economic Growth
- 2. According to the author, the difference between the takeoff stage and economic maturity is that the latter
 - (1) is a period in which only 5 to 10 percent of its resources are used for industry and transportation
 - (2) is a period in which more of its resources are used for the production of consumer goods
 - (3) is a period in which there continue to be political and social obstacles to growth

2. 1 2 3 4 5