

CLIFFS

GED

READING SKILLS PREPARATION GUIDE

THE READING SKILLS TEST

The New High School Equivalency Examination

By William A. Covino, M.A. and
Margaret Coda-Messerle, M.A.
Series Editor: Jerry Bobrow, M.A.

Written by testing experts

New GED question types

Thorough analysis of each area

Two full-length practice tests

Complete answers and explanations

Proven strategies

68055
373

Cliffs
NOTES

CLIFFS

GED Reading Skills Test

PREPARATION GUIDE

The New High School
Equivalency Examination

by

William A. Covino, M.A.

and

Margaret Coda-Messerle, M.A.

Series Editor

Jerry Bobrow, M.A.

Consultants

Debbie Moran, M.A.

Merritt L. Weisinger, J.D.

ISBN 0-8220-2074-9

© Copyright 1981

by

Jerry Bobrow

All Rights Reserved

Printed in U S A

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 four 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:** 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. Read the Five Key Questions for Understanding and Interpreting What You Read, page 17.
- _____ 7. Take the Mini-Test Assessment, starting on page 23.
- _____ 8. Check your answers and analyze your results, page 36.
- _____ 9. Fill out the Tally Sheet for Questions Missed to pinpoint your mistakes, page 38.
- _____ 10. Strictly observing time allotments, take Practice Test 1, starting on page 45.
- _____ 11. Analyze your Practice Test 1 results, page 63.
- _____ 12. Fill out the Tally Sheet for Questions Missed to pinpoint your mistakes, page 65.
- _____ 13. While referring to each item of Practice Test 1, study ALL the Answers and Explanations that begin on page 66.
- _____ 14. Review weak areas as necessary.
- _____ 15. Strictly observing time allotments, take Practice Test 2, starting on page 71.
- _____ 16. Analyze your Practice Test 2 results, page 92.
- _____ 17. Fill out the Tally Sheet for Questions Missed to pinpoint your mistakes, page 94.
- _____ 18. While referring to each item of Practice Test 2, study ALL the Answers and Explanations that begin on page 95.
- _____ 19. Review weak areas as necessary.
- _____ 20. Review How to Take the Test, starting on page 9.
- _____ 21. Carefully read Final Preparation: "The Final Touches," page 101.

CONTENTS

Preface	v
Study Guide Checklist	vi

PART I: INTRODUCTION

FORMAT OF THE NEW GED READING SKILLS TEST	3
GENERAL DESCRIPTION	3
QUESTIONS COMMONLY ASKED ABOUT THE NEW GED TEST BATTERY	4
A SYSTEMATIC OVERALL APPROACH	6

PART II: ANALYSIS OF EXAM AREAS

HOW TO TAKE THE TEST	9
Ability Tested • Basic Skills Necessary • Directions • Analysis • Suggested Approach with Samples	
Practical Reading	10
General Reading	11
Prose Literature	13
Poetry	14
Drama	15
General Procedure for Answering Reading Skills Questions	17
The Five Key Questions for Understanding and Interpreting What You Read	17

PART III: ASSESSMENT /

MINI-TEST WITH COMPLETE ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS	23
Answer Sheet for the Mini-Test	25
Mini-Test	27
Answer Key for the Mini-Test	36
Scoring Your GED Reading Skills Test	37
Mini-Test: Score Approximator	37
Analyzing Your Test Results	37

Mini-Test: Subject Area Analysis Sheet	38
Analysis—Tally Sheet for Questions Missed	38
Complete Answers and Explanations for the Mini-Test	39

PART IV: PRACTICE-REVIEW-ANALYZE-PRACTICE

PRACTICE TEST 1 WITH COMPLETE ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS	45
Answer Sheet for Practice Test 1	47
Practice Test 1	49
Answer Key for Practice Test 1	63
Scoring Your GED Reading Skills Test	64
Practice Test 1: Score Approximator	64
Analyzing Your Test Results	64
Practice Test 1: Subject Area Analysis Sheet	65
Analysis—Tally Sheet for Questions Missed	65
Complete Answers and Explanations for Practice Test 1	66
PRACTICE TEST 2 WITH COMPLETE ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS	71
Answer Sheet for Practice Test 2	73
Practice Test 2	75
Answer Key for Practice Test 2	92
Scoring Your GED Reading Skills Test	93
Practice Test 2: Score Approximator	93
Analyzing Your Test Results	93
Practice Test 2: Subject Area Analysis Sheet	94
Analysis—Tally Sheet for Questions Missed	94
Complete Answers and Explanations for Practice Test 2	95
Final Preparation: “The Final Touches”	101
Appendix: Policies of State Departments of Education and Official GED Centers	103

PART I: Introduction

FORMAT OF THE NEW GED READING SKILLS TEST

Time: 60 Minutes

40 Questions

CONTENT AREAS

Practical Reading	about 15%
General Reading	about 35%
Prose Literature	about 35%
Poetry	about 10%
Drama	about 5%

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The GED Reading Skills Test lasts 1 hour (60 minutes) and consists entirely of multiple-choice questions. The test contains 40 questions focusing on reading comprehension. Emphasis is placed on understanding what is read, with less emphasis on determining implied meaning. The areas covered are practical reading, general reading, prose literature, poetry, and drama with practical reading, general reading, and prose literature comprising most of the exam. 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 man 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.

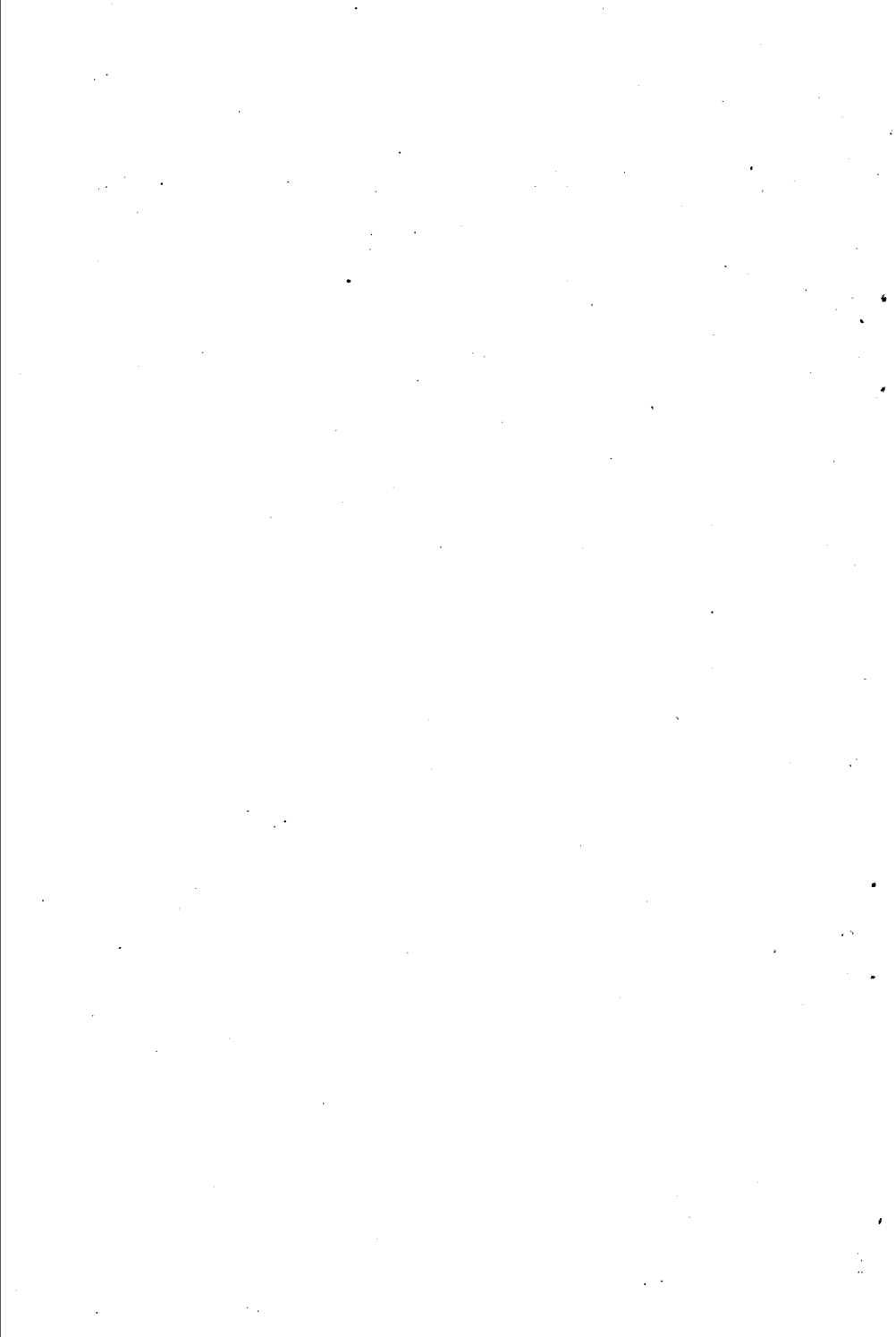
Practice this Systematic Overall Approach on the tests in this book, so it becomes a habit for the actual GED Reading Skills Test.

PART II: Analysis of Exam Areas

This section is designed to introduce you to the GED Reading Skills 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.



HOW TO TAKE THE TEST

The Reading Skills Test contains forty questions based on written passages. The passages cover a wide range of materials, including practical reading, general reading, prose literature, poetry, and drama. In the pages that follow, each of the subareas of reading skills will be fully discussed. But first, here are some general comments on effective reading.

Effective Reading

Two strategies that will improve your reading comprehension are prereading the questions and marking the passage. Readers who use these strategies tend to score much higher on reading tests than readers who don't.

Prereading the questions. Before reading the passage, read each question (but don't spend time reading all the multiple-choice answers) and circle the most important word or phrase. *Sample:*

The author's argument in favor of freedom of speech may be summarized in which of the following ways?

- (1) If every speaker is not free, no speaker is.
- (2) Speech keeps us free from the animal kingdom.
- (3) As we think, so we speak.
- (4) The Bill of Rights ensures free speech.
- (5) Lunatic speeches are not free speeches.

The most *important* part is usually the most concrete and specific one. In this case, you might circle "freedom of speech." The question parts that you circle will be those you'll tend to remember when you read the passage. In this case, you would be likely to notice and pay close attention to "freedom of speech" when it occurs in the passage. Thus, prereading allows you to focus on the parts of the passage that contain the answers.

Marking the passage. After prereading the questions, read and mark the passage. *Always mark those spots that contain information relevant to the questions you've read. In addition, you should mark other important ideas and details.* More specific advice on marking, in reference to specific subareas of reading skills, follows. In general though, *remember not to overmark*; never make more than a few marks per paragraph in order to make those parts that you mark stand out.

Directions and Analysis

These directions apply to all of the reading skills passages and questions.

Read each passage through once; then read the questions following that selection, answering the easiest ones. Reread the passage if necessary to answer the more difficult questions.

1. Notice that the directions assume that you will not skim the questions. But if you *do skim the questions*, you will reduce the necessity for rereading the passage.

2. Notice that the directions assume that you will not mark the passage. But if you *do mark the passage*, you will increase your reading alertness and help yourself focus on relevant details.

3. Practical reading often includes questions which refer to *main ideas* and *specific details*: *Main ideas* are usually expressed by the first sentence in each paragraph. Underlining first sentences should draw your attention to main ideas. *Specific details* are concrete facts, statistics, etc., that give support for the main ideas.

PRACTICAL READING

About six of the forty reading skills questions will be based on practical reading passages. Such passages include sets of instructions, recipes, contractual agreements, advertisements and propaganda, catalog entries, newspaper articles, outlines, cartoons and pictures accompanied by words, application forms, etc. These are the sorts of items you read day to day.

Ability Tested

Practical reading passages generally test your ability to recognize main ideas and to see relationships between details in a passage.

Basic Skills Necessary

Students who have read widely and know how to read and mark a passage tend to do well with these questions.

Suggested Approach with Short Sample Passage

By the time a child starts school, he has mastered the major part of the rules of his grammar. He has managed to accomplish this remarkable feat in such a short time by experimenting with and generalizing the