

Minnesota Literacy Council GED Orientation

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1. Introduction to the MLC

Welcome to the Minnesota Literacy Council's GED program! The Minnesota Literacy Council (MLC) is a nonprofit, statewide organization. We provide literacy services to adults, children, volunteers and community programs across Minnesota.

MLC was founded in February of 1972. We are now one of the nation's largest literacy organizations. We offer "a full range of services that help children and adults acquire the literacy skills they need to become successful students, workers, family members, and community citizens" (MLC website), by

- Teaching basic reading and math skills to adults.
- Offering citizenship and GED preparation classes.
- Conducting English language classes for immigrants and refugees.
- Providing in-home literacy services to disadvantaged children and their parents.
- Referring thousands of adult learners to literacy programs in their communities.
- Training preschool teachers in early-literacy development and assessment techniques.
- Managing volunteers in summer literacy programs for at-risk children.
- Training hundreds of volunteer tutors each year.
- Giving technical and management support to more than 100 local literacy programs in Minnesota.

Our Mission is to share the power of learning through education, community building, and advocacy.

With this mission in mind, MLC:

- Helps adults become self-sufficient citizens through improved literacy;
- Helps at-risk children and families gain literacy skills to increase school success;
- Strengthens communities by raising literacy levels and encouraging volunteerism;
- Raises awareness of literacy needs and services throughout the state (MLC Employee Handbook, 2008, p. 2).

1.1 What is “Literacy” and Why is it Important?

Since you are here, you have already figured out that literacy is important. But what is it exactly? And since this is the Minnesota LITERACY Council, looking at the definition of *Literacy* may be helpful.

If you Google, “What is Literacy?” several sites appear. On Dictionary.com the definition is:

lit·er·a·cy [lit-er-uh-see] noun

1. the quality or state of being literate, especially the ability to read and write.
2. possession of education: *to question someone's literacy.*
3. a person's knowledge of a particular subject or field: *to acquire computer literacy.* This also describes health literacy, family literacy, financial literacy, workforce literacy (pre-employment preparation) and workplace literacy (supporting current workers);

The definition of literacy has evolved from the basic ability to read and write, to "using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals and to develop one's knowledge and potential" (“Three Types of Literacy,” 2003).

Literacy has been broken down into three different types:

- **Prose Literacy** – This is the ability to read and understand documents of continuous text, such as newspaper articles, plays, books or instructions.
- **Document Literacy** – This is the ability to read and understand documents of non-continuous text, such as job applications, maps, bus schedules.
- **Quantitative Literacy** – This is the ability to perform computations, such as reviewing a bill or balancing a checkbook.

These are the three types of literacy, or reading, that people need to be able to do to function on a daily basis. While you are here at the MLC, we will read different kinds of documents, maps, charts and tables as well as articles on different topics. Some of these you may be very good at. Some you may need to improve on – and that is why you are here! (“Three Types of Literacy,” 2003).

A study conducted in 2007 found that literacy levels are reflected in your GED test scores; GED scores are valid as “an indication of achieving the literacy skills and knowledge associated with a high school program of study” (Hsu & George, 2007, p. 15).

Literacy is a human right, a tool of personal empowerment and a means for social and human development. Educational opportunities depend on literacy.

Literacy is at the heart of basic education for all, and essential for eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy. A good quality basic education equips pupils with literacy skills for life and further learning; literate parents are more likely to send their children to school; literate people are better able to access continuing educational opportunities; and literate societies are better geared to meet pressing development (“Literacy.” UNESCO, n.d.) Retrieved from <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/education-building-blocks/literacy/>

Experience and research show that literacy can be a major tool for eradicating poverty, enlarging employment opportunities, advancing gender equality, improving family health, protecting the environment and promoting democratic participation. A literate home environment is a boon to child development, having a positive impact on how long girls and boys stay enrolled in school and how effectively they learn (United Nations, Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Dept. of Public Information, 2005).

1.2 Orientation Objectives

You have decided to take the GED for your own personal reasons. You might be planning to go to college, to get licensed in a trade, to get a promotion at work, to get a better job, or you might have decided to get your GED for your own personal satisfaction. All of these are great reasons! (GED Basics, 2010).

We want you to succeed and to meet your goals. We are here to partner with you in your journey to achieve your GED. We know you are excited and want to get started in the classroom! This guide has been developed to help you along the journey.

Orientation will give you a glimpse of the big picture and the resources available to you at the MLC. There are also many resources available to help you within the greater Twin Cities community and online. These will be included in this guide as well.



2. Program and Classroom Expectations

2.1 Role of the Learning Center Coordinator

Each MLC site has a Learning Center Coordinator. The Coordinator oversees the GED program as well as all other programs at the site (ESL classes). Since he or she is working with all classes, students and volunteers, they are very busy! Part of the goal with this guide is to provide you with the majority of the information you need regarding the MLC, the learning center and the GED. But if you still have questions, the Coordinators' have a wealth of information and resources. They can answer questions and suggest additional study materials.

2.2 Attendance – It Affects Success!

Each site will have its own Attendance Policy.

It is probably not a surprise that the students who come to class the most progress faster than those who do not come to class. And that is what we expect here at the MLC! There are a number of reasons this is true:

- The more you come, the more review or new information you will be exposed to.
- Since MLC's program is classroom-based, you have the opportunity to learn from the instructor as well as your classmates.
- Coming to class allows you to create relationships with other students.
- Coming to class every day demonstrates that you are *COMMITTED* to completing this portion of your education.
- Coming to class demonstrates this commitment and that you are willing to persevere even when other parts of your life get hectic.

What if you cannot come to class one day?

If something unexpected happens, such as the sickness of a child or parent, or your car breaks down and you cannot get to class, please call us! If you are going to miss work, you have to call. If you have plans with a friend and you have to cancel or reschedule, you call. It is the same with school. Please call to let us know that you will not be at class that day. It is the responsible and respectful thing to do!

What if you need to take a “leave of absence”?

Sometimes unexpected things happen in life and you cannot help it. Please talk to the Coordinator – let them know you will be out for a while; if you know how long it will be, let them know. **Re-Entry** into your program is not guaranteed. Once you are able to return to class, please contact the Coordinator to see if there is space in the class and to schedule a time to come in and update your TABE score. If you miss class for **more than two weeks**, for any reason, you will be required to take a TABE before you can rejoin the class.

Successful students:

- Are self-motivated.
- Appreciate and encourage other students.
- Have strong self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Develop good study habits.
- Associate with other successful students (Siebert & Karr, 2008).



2.3 Goal Setting

How do you know if you are on track and making progress toward achieving your GED? By setting goals that you can track and achieve! Success is reaching your goals, both long-term and short-term; successful students set and reach their goals. Getting to any goal you work for makes you a successful person. Your goals are personal to you; the key is to make certain your goals are self-chosen (Siebert & Karr, 2008).

Planning is the foundation for success.

There are two types of goals – Long-term and Short-term:

- **Long-term goals** describe what you expect to accomplish in the next three months, as well as any project that will take longer than a week.
- **Short-term goals** cover what you want to accomplish today or this week. Short-term plans are often steps toward your longer-term objectives.

2.3a LONG-TERM PLANNING

Establish Objectives – The first step in long-term planning is establishing objectives.

Do you want to achieve your GED in three months? Or six months? You decide.

Determine What You Need to Meet Your Goals – The second step is to make sure you have what you need to reach your goals.

Define Action Steps – Action steps become part of your short-term plans.

What are the steps in getting your GED? What resources do you need? Outline the process.

Schedule Action Steps

With your action steps written down, schedule the tasks you will be doing to meet your goals according to your timeline. Use monthly and weekly calendars to help schedule your time.

Provide Ways to Measure Progress

How many practice tests have you taken? How many have you scored over 450 on? Has your essay writing improved?

(City of Denver website, n.d.).

2.3b SHORT-TERM PLANNING

Weekly Plans

“A weekly plan should describe what you want to accomplish by the end of the week and the activities needed to get you there. Make your weekly planning part of your study routine. Weekly plans can be developed on Friday for the following week, over the weekend or on Monday morning before class starts” (City of Denver website, n.d.).

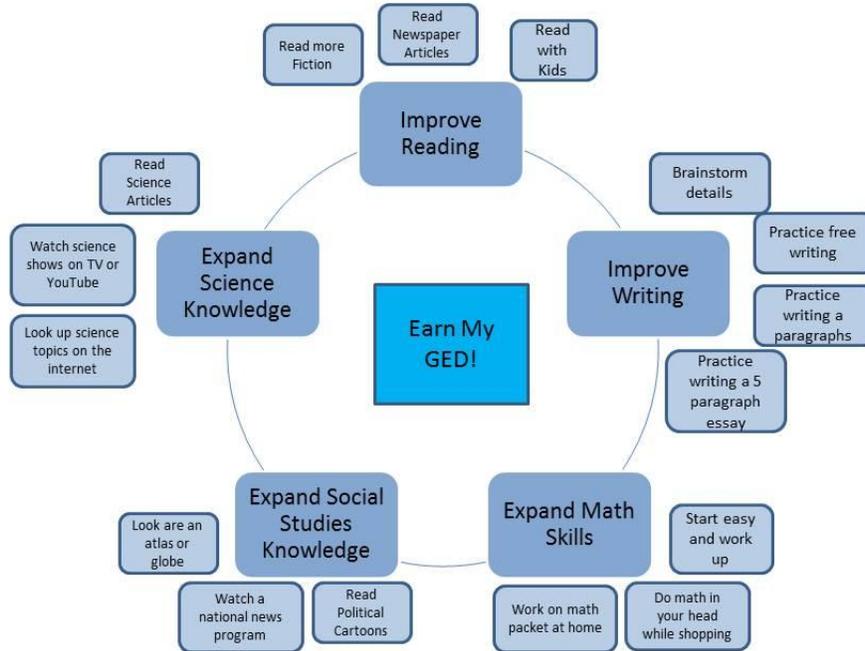
Daily Plans

“If you make a habit of using a daily calendar, many of your activities will already be recorded. This is the best way to develop your “things to do today” list. A daily prioritized list is the best way to focus your attention on your most important objectives. Work from the top of your list. When unexpected demands arise, assess their priority and handle them accordingly. At the end of each day, carry forward any items that need completing. Reprioritize these with tomorrow’s new items” (City of Denver website, n.d.).



2.3c Goal Mapping – Learning Goals & Strategies for Achievement

example



Create your own!!



2.4 Earning a GED Scholarship

We offer a GED Scholarship to qualifying students which pays for you to take the GED tests. To qualify for the scholarship, you must:

- Currently be enrolled in MLC GED classes;
- Attended 40 hours of class (excludes distance learning); have an 80% attendance rate;
- Score at least 500 on 3 of the official practice tests, with an overall average of 450 or higher on all practice tests – OR – get a scholarship for one subject test by scoring 500 or better on the practice test;
- Fill-out a GED Scholarship Application;
- Take a TABE post-test;
- Your site may also require an exit interview at the same time you take the final TABE test (MLC, n.d.).



Dos and Don'ts in a Diverse Community

At the MLC, we have students from varied backgrounds, experiences and even parts of the world!

Diversity includes race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, religion, age, political beliefs, cultural experiences, work experiences, travel experiences and values. The academic setting encourages respectful sharing of opinions and openness to other people's views. Many people hold stereotypes of others, but the academic community encourages its participants to examine and question those views (Simon, 2010, p. 7);

Dos	Don'ts
Do listen respectfully and allow others to express their views.	Don't ask one individual to represent the views of an entire group to which he or she may belong.
Do encourage others to participate in discussions.	Don't ask anyone to share personal information that he or she may not be ready to share.
Do ask questions respectfully.	

3. Basics of the GED Tests

The Tests of General Educational Development, or the GED, provide adults who do not have a high school diploma the opportunity to earn a State of Minnesota GED Diploma. The five tests in the GED measure academic competencies similar to those required to graduate with a high school diploma (Zhang, Han & Peterson, 2009).

Warning Regarding Misleading GED Claims

The State of Minnesota GED Diploma can be neither earned nor obtained via the Internet or through correspondence programs. The Tests of General Educational Development developed by the GED Testing Service® often require extensive preparation and/or the demonstration of a high level of high school knowledge and academic skills. Tests are administered only at official GED Testing Centers under the direction of the Minnesota Department of Education. Any other GED diploma or “high school equivalency certificate” not issued by the Minnesota Department of Education may not be accepted by employers, colleges and universities or the military.

GED® and the GED Testing Service® are registered trademarks of the American Council on Education® and may not be used or reproduced without the express written permission of the American Council on Education® (Minnesota Department of Education website, n.d.).

Each year, from 2002 to 2007, between 600,000 and 700,000 people have taken the GED nationally; and of test-takers 70% pass the GED (George & Hsu, 2007).

3.1 Who can take the GED in Minnesota?

- Individuals who are not currently enrolled in high school and do not have a high school diploma.
- Individuals who are at least 19 years of age OR at least 16 years of age and have obtained an Age Waiver (see form in the Appendix, p. 47).
- Individuals who are Minnesota residents.
- Individuals who have a valid, current, government-issued, photo ID such as a driver’s license or Minnesota ID card.

(Minnesota Department of Education Website, n.d.).

3.2 How long will it take to get your GED?

Students generally devote between 30 and 35 hours on preparation (Zhan, Han & Peterson, 2009). At the MLC, that is equivalent to attending classes for one month. But, the amount of time it takes a student to complete their GED varies from student to student. It depends on:

- Your skill level when you enter the program.
- How often you attend class.
- How much you study outside of class.
- How rapidly your skills improve.

So, it depends on where you are starting from and how hard you work and how quickly you are able to understand new concepts and develop your skills (Minneapolis Community Education website, n.d.).

3.3 What do you need to know to pass the GED?

Passing the GED does not require rote memorization or extensive, in-depth knowledge of the subject areas. Each of the tests is designed to gauge the same four broad skills:

- Comprehension – understanding and interpreting information
- Analysis – drawing specific inferences and conclusions from information
- Synthesis and evaluation – characterizing, generalizing from, and making judgments about information
- Application – using information in ways other than those presented

Even when you're doing the Math sections, any formulas that you might need to use will be provided in the test booklet. (GED Basics, 2010, p. 3).



3.4 Which test is the hardest?

Partly, the answer to that question is specific to you and what makes the most sense to you. However, on average, the Math test and the Language Arts, Writing test are the most difficult. These two tests have the lowest passing scores on average (George & Schaefer, 2002, p 19).

3.5 How is the test scored and what scores do you need to pass?

The scoring system ranges from 200 to 800, with a mean score of 500. You need to score **at least a 410** on each test and an **overall average score of 450 for the five tests**. The essay is scored on a scale of 1 to 4; you must score a 2, 3 or 4 on the essay to receive credit. So, for the Language Arts, Writing exam, you must score a minimum of 410 on Part I and a minimum of 2 on Part II to pass that subject. (GED Basics, 2010; Cracking the GED, 2010).

3.6 How is the essay scored?

Your essay will be read and scored by two trained readers. The essay does not have “a correct answer;” the readers “want to get an overall impression of your writing. This is called ‘holistic scoring’ because it treats your writing as a whole rather than focusing on particular characteristics” (Pass the GED: Language Arts, Writing Test, 2003, p. 2).

Your essay is scored holistically on a 4-point scale by two trained readers; a third reader will score the essay if the two readers’ scores are more than one point different. Between the two readers, each can assign your essay a score 1 – 4; the scores will be added, resulting in a combined score of 2 – 8; the score will then be averaged. So, your final score could be 1, 1.5, 2, 2.5, 3, 3.5 or 4. If you only score a 1 or 1.5 on the essay, it will not count, and you will need to retake both Parts I and II (Tyler, 2003; Marguiles & Blair. n.d; GED Essay, 2002).

Each reader will assign the essay a score on a scale of 1 to 4:

- 4 Effective
- 3 Adequate
- 2 Marginal
- 1 Inadequate

3.7 Will all community colleges and universities accept your GED credential?

It is a good idea to contact the college or university you are interested in attending to find out their admission requirements. Several community colleges accept the GED and several administer their own placement tests. MCTC uses the AccuPlacer, another standardized test. For more information about this test, please go to:

<http://www.minneapolis.edu/Admissions/Placement-Tests>

**Passing the GED requires answering about half of the
questions on each of the five tests correctly
(Cracking the GED, 2010).**

3.8 Do you have to take all the tests at one time?

NO! At the MLC, we recommend that you take only one or two tests at a time. The total time for all five tests is more than 7 hours! That is basically an entire work day! If you have one subject that you have been doing very well in, take that test first. Once you have passed a test, you can devote more study time to the subject tests you still need to take. This can actually help you prepare for the next test in less time. Talk to the Coordinator at your site; the Coordinator will help you decide what order to take the tests in, based on your strengths (Minnesota Department of Education Website, n.d.).

3.9 When and where are the GED tests offered?

Testing days and times vary by location. The Minneapolis Northside ABE location tests only once a month, while the Minneapolis Southside location offers the tests twice a week. Contact the location nearest you to find out the days and times the test is offered.

There is a [list of sites](#) below in Minneapolis, St. Paul and some surrounding areas.

Or call the MLC Adult Literacy Hotline to locate a testing center: 1-800-222-1990.

Or go to this site to find a testing center near you:

<http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/groups/AdultCareer/documents/Announcement/036320.pdf>

(Minnesota Department of Education website, n.d.).



3.10 How much does it cost?

The cost of the test varies by location. The testing sites in Minneapolis and St. Paul charge \$75. If an agency is paying for your tests (such as the MLC Scholarship Fund), the cost is \$95. Retesting is \$20 per test for individuals and agencies (Minneapolis Community Education, n.d.).

3.11 When will you get your test results?

This also depends on where you test. Some locations will call you the next day with your score. Some locations will NOT tell you over the phone, but will mail you the information within 5 business days. This is another great question to ask the testing site! (Minnesota Department of Education Website, n.d.).

3.12 What if you do not pass? Can you take the GED more than once?

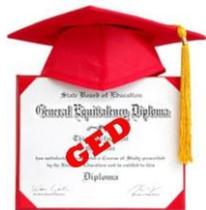
In Minnesota, once you pass a subject, that test is valid for one year. That means you will want to pass all the remaining tests within that one year. You can take each subject test three times within one year. That subject test is valid until the new version of the test launches January 1, 2014. The \$75 you pay for the five test battery is valid for one year.

Again, you must score a minimum on each test of 410 and an overall average of 450. If you do not score 410 on any individual test you must retake that test; and there is a waiting period of 60-days. If you have taken all 5 tests but do not average 450, you can retake any part of the exam. Each subject that you retake costs \$20. Only your highest scores will be reported to the MN Department of Education once you pass the battery of tests (Adult Options In Education, n.d.).

3.13 Do you get a diploma?

YES! Once you attain passing scores, you will be issued a State of Minnesota GED Diploma. A diploma, sometimes called a credential, and a transcript will be sent to the address you provided to the testing site.

ONLY ONE duplicate copy of your State of Minnesota GED Diploma will be issued ever. So don't request one unless you really need or want it as you'll never be able to get another one. There is no charge to obtain the additional copy of your State of Minnesota GED Diploma (Minnesota Department of Education Website, n.d.).



3.14 How do you get copies of your transcript?

Additional copies of your transcript may be requested by contacting the Minnesota Department of Education's GED Office. See the request form and instructions below. You can request as many copies of your transcript as you need – copies maybe \$5 – make sure to ask when you request copies.

Most postsecondary educational institutions, employers and the military require only the transcript. Many postsecondary institutions want an "Official Transcript." You can specify that in your request and the GED Office will provide a transcript in a sealed envelope with an inked message over the seal indicating it is an Official Transcript if not opened prior to receipt.

TO REQUEST A TRANSCRIPT: Complete the Record Request Form (see link below) and fax it to the GED Office at 651-582-8458. If you wish to complete the form electronically, use the Word Version and print the completed form so you can sign it. Then you may scan it and send it as an email attachment to alice.smith@state.mn.us.

GED Records Request Form and Instructions

http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Learning_Support/Adult_Basic_Education_GED/GED/index.html

You will find the form to request your GED records at the above website. Fill out the form and fax it in. Please read the instructions closely (Minnesota Department of Education, n.d.).

3.15 What if you have taken and passed one or more parts of the GED in another state?

The scores are still valid in Minnesota. And if you have taken and passed some of the tests in Minnesota and move, those scores will be valid in other states. Before you move, it is a good idea to contact your testing site to verify this and request a partial transcript (Minnesota Department of Education, n.d.).



4. Strategies for Being a Successful Student

4.1 Create a Personal Support Group

“Research into understanding why some people handle stress and difficult challenges better than others shows that the people who cope best have good support groups” (Siebert and Karr, 2008).

You are making a big commitment to get your GED. This decision will affect you and others in your life. Some people you know may not understand why you want to further your education. Others will be very supportive.

First, start with those closest to you – your family and close friends. Share with them why you want to get your GED. And ask them to help you by being positive and supportive of your efforts. “As with any life change, becoming an adult student requires personal sacrifices because it requires a commitment” (Simon, 2010, p. 6). You are likely to find yourself occasionally in a position when you need to choose between going to class or studying and doing something else. If you have recruited members of your household to help you get out the door in the morning, then on a day you want to stay in bed, they might come wake you up! But there will be other times when you have to turn down opportunities to socialize because you need to study. If your friends and family understand your commitment to your goal, it will be easier for them to respect your time and decision if you have to say, “No,” to something. “Make it a necessity and others will begin to see it as an important part of your life” (Simon, 2010, p. 6-7).

Second, recruit support from other communities you are involved in. You may be involved in an employment program, church or faith community, support group or other communities that have an interest in you and your life. People in these parts of your life can often serve as additional personal support.

Third, you may also find support among your classmates. You will all have different strengths and getting together outside of class could allow you to help one another through the process. Even coming to class and having classmates you enjoy being around and learning from makes the whole experience more enjoyable. Try to connect with a few of your classmates; having a community and feeling supported in the classroom can go a long way in helping you enjoy school and persevere when it gets tough (Simon, 2010).

4.2 Computer Literacy

If you are not comfortable using a computer – change that!

In the workplace and in education settings, there is a lot of information available on the internet. Most job applications are submitted online. There are numerous online study guides and GED practice tests included in this orientation guide. However, you have to be comfortable to use them! If you are not comfortable using a computer, please ask your Coordinator where you can take a basic computer class. Several libraries around the Metro offer classes; or you can take a computer class at our Lake St. location. You can also learn how to type! There is typing software that can help you get more proficient on the keyboard available at all sites. As soon as 2014, the GED will be given on a computer! So talk to your Coordinator. Get comfortable typing and using the internet.

4.3 Study Skills

Keep it simple but keep it consistent too.

- **Set aside time and space to study.**
- **Stay organized. Know where your materials are and keep them together by subject.**
- **Take notes.**

4.3a Set Aside Time and Space to Study

“Find a physically separate space and set a definite time for studying. Treat it like a *business* activity. When you return to your family and work from studying, you know that ‘school’ is taken care of, and you’ll feel more relaxed” (Simon, 2010, p. 7).

It is important to set aside time for class and studies, just like you schedule time to work. Your life is busy – you might have a job, a child or other family members to care for; you have daily chores to do and time gets sucked up just getting from one place to the next. You have a full life already!

Your study space might be in your office, a desk in the bedroom or even the kitchen table. Make studying part of your routine. Maybe you study right after school or after dinner. Perhaps you study at the same time as your kids do. Maybe the kids get to watch TV for an hour

or two while you study. Maybe you study after everyone in the house has gone to bed, or before anyone else gets up. This is up to you, your situation and what will work best for you to achieve your goals (Simon, 2010).

It is often a great idea to have a location outside your home where you can go to study as well. Libraries are great for this! You can get online, they are quiet and full of dictionaries if you need one. If you have a laptop, you could also go to the library or a coffee shop or other business that has wireless internet. Or, if you are using books or handouts, pack those up and find your own special, quiet spot!

4.3b Organizing Your Materials

It is a good idea to get a notebook for each subject; try to get a different color for each subject. For example, get a blue notebook for Science and a red notebook for Social Studies. This will allow you to keep the materials organized more easily and make it easier to find particular handouts when you go back to use them. You may want to organize them by date, so they are easy to find. Or you may want to organize them by subject, such as: noun-verb agreement, fractions, reading graphs, etc. (Siebert and Karr, 2010).

4.3c Note Taking

“The nature of human memory is such that people soon forget most of what they hear no matter how much they intend to remember” (Siebert and Karr, 2010, p.36).

So take notes! (Siebert and Karr, 2010; Simon, 2010):

- **Use the same notebook for the appropriate subject each week.**
If you forget your notebook one day, you can take notes on loose-leaf paper and then copy your notes into your notebook.
- **Start the day with a new, clean piece of paper and put the date at the top.**
Put the date on the top of each page of notes you take that day.
- **Write the topic of the class on the top line of your page.**
- **There are different methods for taking notes.**
Deciding how to take notes is part personal preference and part aligning your notes with the structure of the class. Three ways of taking notes are described here: outline format, summary format and mapping format.

Outline Format

Outlining notes is the most traditional way of taking notes. This method works well if the instructor is organized and presents ideas and information in a logical order. Outlines begin with a main topic. Major points are given capitalized headings, A, B, C; under each you can put in supporting information, 1, 2, 3. For example:

Note Taking

- A. Use the proper notebook
- B. Use a pen you like
 - 1. Blue ink
 - 2. Red ink
- C. Write legibly

Summary Format

This method allows you to listen for several minutes and then write a short paragraph summarizing the main points. This method is useful when an instructor uses long stories or examples and is less organized. You will need to master writing a few sentences or a short paragraph without missing the beginning of the next topic. This can take practice (Siebert and Karr, 2010).

General Note Taking Tips

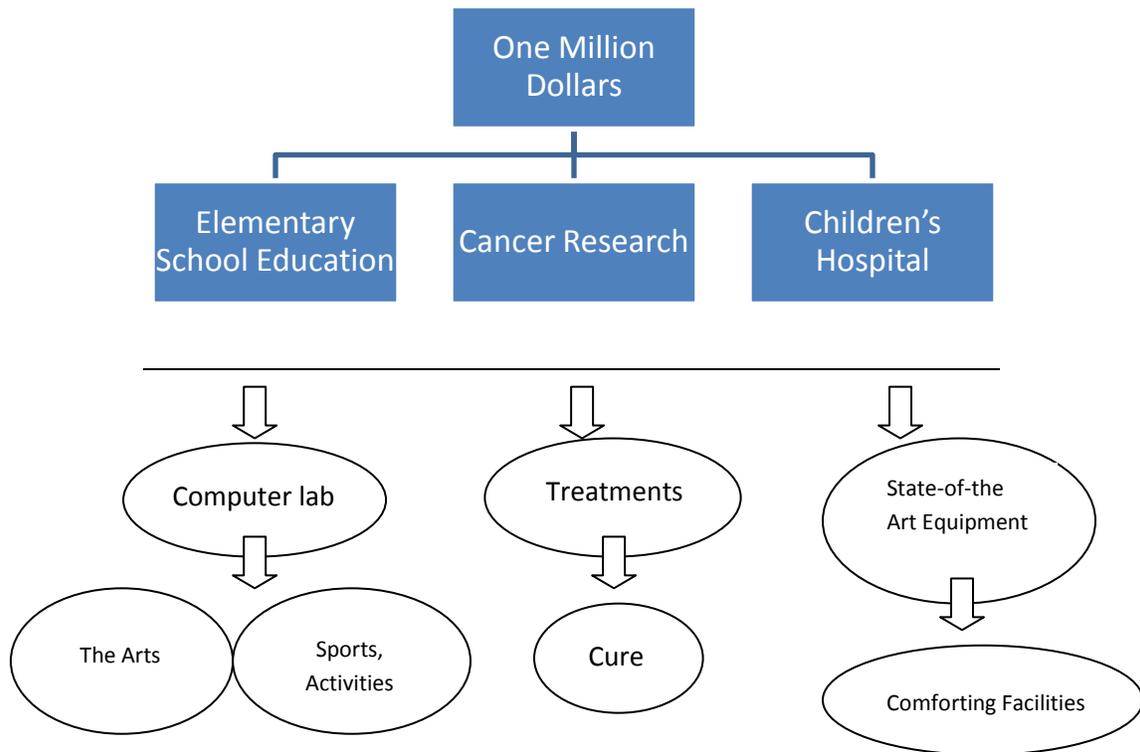
- **It is a good idea to write down what the instructor writes on the board – if they write it down, it is usually important.**
- **Listen for the instructor’s cues about the value of ideas discussed;** if they stress an idea, write down the idea and supporting details to help you remember them later.
- **Make sure you can identify and know the key terms for each lesson.**
- **Even if you do not ask the questions in class, include any questions you might have as you are taking notes.** You can ask the instructor after class or look them up on the internet yourself.
- **Write down or highlight words you do not understand.** Ask the instructor for clarification if it is during class. If you find a word you do not know while reading, see if you can figure out how it is used based on the context of the paragraph.

If you still do not know the word, write it down to look up in the dictionary later; if the word is very important in understanding the entire passage, stop reading and look it up. Write down the definition so you can easily and quickly refer to it again later (Simon, 2010).

Mapping

Mapping is a very visual method of taking notes. You should start with a blank sheet of paper. Each main idea is placed in a circle, near the middle of the paper. As you learn about the details of each main idea, you make smaller but connecting circles. Here's an example:

If you were given one million dollars and you cannot spend it on yourself, family or friends, what would you do with the money?



4.4 Critical Thinking

Critical thinking means analysis, not negative criticism. Thinking critically means you ask questions, solve problems logically, and bring your powers of reason to an issue. Critical thinking is thinking critically and analytically, rather than emotionally (Simon, 2010).

We want to help you C.A.R.E. about your studies, by developing

- C Comprehension
- A Analysis
- R Responses with
- E Evidence

Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully

- Conceptualizing
- Applying
- Analyzing
- Synthesizing, and/or
- Evaluating

information gathered from, or generated by,

- observation
- experience
- reflection
- reasoning
- communication

as a guide to belief and action.

Critical thinking is based on universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness (Scriven & Paul, 1987):

A critical thinker:

- raises vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely;
- gathers and assesses relevant information, using abstract ideas to interpret it effectively;
- comes to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards;
- thinks openmindedly within alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing, as need be, their assumptions, implications, and practical consequences; and
- communicates effectively with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems.

“Critical thinking is self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective thinking...It entails effective communication and problem solving abilities and a commitment to overcome our native egocentrism and sociocentrism” (Paul & Elder, 2008).

Be an Active Reader

Active readers respond to the text; this means you (Simon, 2010):

- Take notes.
- Ask questions of the text.
- Look for patterns in the text.
- Look for main ideas and main arguments.
- Think about how the evidence supports (or does not support) the idea or argument.

Read in a quiet place. Be comfortable, but not too comfortable – or you will fall asleep! Keep a notebook and pen or pencil near you, as well as a dictionary.

Remember, reading for an hour every day is more productive than reading for several hours at once. Developing reading stamina is like developing running stamina – start where you are: if you can only run for 10’ one week that is fine. The second week increase each run by three minutes; the third week add another five minutes. By the end of one month you could be up to between 23 and 25 minutes of running. Do the same with your reading. As you practice and add more time gradually, you will improve your fluency (how quickly you read) and stamina (how easily you can read at a sitting) (RocketReader Newsletter, n.d.).

Lastly, set aside a few minutes of every reading session to review what you read. If you are going to read for more than an hour, get up out of your chair about every hour, stretch, walk around a little bit, drink some water. It is kind of like going on a road trip, to stay fresh and alert, you need to take some short breaks. (Simon, 2010; RocketReader Newsletter, n.d.).

4.5 Tracking Your Progress - The TABE Test

TABE stands for Tests of Adult Basic Education. At the MLC, we use the TABE to track your progress and evaluate level gains based on your results. We will generally give you either a Reading or Language TABE. There are also TABE tests for Math, Language Mechanics, Vocabulary and Spelling. There are different versions of the TABE. As your scores improve you advance to more difficult versions.

The TABE helps us show the state that our students are learning and improving. This information can also be used to help us obtain additional funding from public or private grants, which allow the MLC to offer GED classes for free (TABE Overview website, 2011).

The time between tests may vary; you will be tested no more than once a month, but at least once every 6 – 8 weeks. The TABE will be administered during regular class times.

5. Breakdown of Each GED Test, Types of Questions and Test Taking Tips

5.1 The Five Tests

Table 1. Percentage Breakdowns of Each of the Five Tests (Tyler, 2003; Cracking the GED, 2010; GED Basics, 2010).

Language Arts, Reading	65 minutes 40 questions	Literacy (drama, poetry, prose)	75%
		non-fiction (prose, critical reviews and business documents)	25%
		Comprehension	20%
		Synthesis	30 – 35%
		Analysis	30 – 35%
		Application	15%
Language Arts, Writing*	120 minutes total 75 minutes – Part I 50 multiple choice questions	Sentence Structure	30%
		Usage	30%
		Mechanics	25%
		Organization	15%
	45 minutes – Part II	Essay	
Mathematics**	90 minutes total Part I – 45 minutes 25 questions Calculator Allowed	Number Operations and Number Sense	20% 30%
		Data Analysis, Statistics and Probability	20%-30%
	Part II – 45 minutes 25 questions No Calculator	Algebra, Functions, and Patterns	20%-30%
		Same breakdown	
Science	80 minutes 50 questions	Measurement and Geometry	20%-30%
		Life Science	45%
		Physical Science	35%
		Earth and Space Science	20%
Social Studies	70 minutes 50 questions	History	40%
		U.S. History	25%
		World History	15%
		Civics and Government	25%
		Economics	20%
		Geography	15%

*** Language Arts – Writing:** This test has two parts. Part I is a multiple-choice section. The questions are about usage, sentence structure, organization and mechanics. The questions types are: correction (45%), revision (35%), and construction shift (20%) (Tyler, 2003; Cracking the GED, 2010; GED Basics, 2010);

You have up to 75 minutes to work on this part. If you don't finish this part in 75 minutes, the examiner will instruct you to begin working on the essay. You have up to 45 minutes to work on the essay.

**** Mathematics:** This test is also in two parts. In Part I, you can use a calculator. You have up to 45 minutes with the calculator. After 45 minutes, the calculator will be collected and you will be given Part II. You then have another 45 minutes to complete Part II. You can continue to work on Part I if you want to, but without the calculator. If you decide to start on Part II before 45 minutes have passed, you can, but the calculator will be collected and you will not be able to get it back again.

Most of the Math questions are multiple-choice (80%); however, there two kinds of *alternate format* questions on the math test (20%). Examples are provided below on p. 32.

Taking practice tests is a great way to prepare for the real test. Of the 5 subjects, researchers found that taking the practice test for Math had the greatest impact on scores (McLaughlin, Skaggs & Patterson, 2009).

5.2 The GED Tests' Higher-Order Thinking Skills

What does that mean? You will not be tested on memorization of facts and formulas. What you will be asked to do is use higher-order thinking, which is analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. These higher-order skills rely on the lower-order skills of knowledge and comprehension. All five of these will be used and tested throughout the GED tests.

You will be tested on (Official GED Practice Tests Administrators' Manual, 2002; Pass the GED: Language Arts, Reading Test, 2003; GED for Free website, n.d.):

- **Knowledge** – requires you to observe and recall information, including major ideas or concepts, and a basic mastery of subject matter. You should have knowledge of ideas and concepts that can be used to help you answer questions.
- **Comprehension** – measures your ability to extract basic meaning and the intent of the writing; this can refer to one part of the text or the text as a whole. To show that you understand the text, you may need to:
 - Restate, paraphrase or summarize the information
 - Explain the clear implications of the text
 - Translate knowledge into new contexts
 - Make inferences
 - Draw conclusions
- **Application** – measures your ability to use ideas and/or information from the text in a situation different from the one described; this measures your ability to transfer concepts from the context of the reading to a new context. These questions measure your ability to:
 - Restate, paraphrase or summarize the information
 - Explain the clear implications of the text
 - Use information in a new context
 - Solve problems that require skills and knowledge
- **Analysis** – measures your ability to breakdown information into basic elements; these questions usually refer to a specific part of the text. To show your ability to analyze the text, you may need to:
 - Draw conclusions and make inferences
 - Demonstrate understanding of consequences
 - State cause and effect relationships
 - Recognize unstated assumptions and identify conclusions from the supporting statements
 - Make a series of related inferences
 - Distinguish fact from opinion
 - Recognize elements of style and structure, such as tone, word usage, characterization, use of detail, examples and figurative language

- **Synthesis** – measures your ability to make judgments about the validity and reliability of information based on criteria provided or assumed. You may need to:
 - Interpret the overall tone, point of view, style or purpose of the work
 - Make connections among parts of the text
 - Use old ideas to create new ones
 - Make generalizations based on given facts
 - Make predictions based on information provided

- **Evaluation** – measures your ability to put ideas together to form a whole. These questions draw on multiple inferences from many parts of the text. You may need to:
 - Compare and discriminate among ideas
 - Assess the value of theories, evidence and presentations
 - Recognize the role that values play in beliefs and decision making
 - Indicate logical fallacies in arguments

5.3 Language Arts – Reading

The Language Arts, Reading test consists of 40 multiple choice questions. You have 65 minutes.

There will be three fictional passages in this section. Each will be from a different time period. There will be nonfiction selections taken from business documents, reviews or sections of articles you might find in a newspaper or magazine (Pass the GED: Language Arts, Reading Test, 2003). You will also have an excerpt from one play, one poem and two of the following: a review of a performance, an article on popular culture, or a business related topic. After each type of passage, you will be asked questions on your comprehension and your ability to analyze and apply what you read (Cracking the GED, 2010). You will read selections and interpret what you read, think about why writers use particular words and phrases and “use the reading as a springboard for other ideas” (Pass the GED: Language Arts, Reading Test, 2003, p.1).

When you are reading the fiction passages, ask yourself these questions:

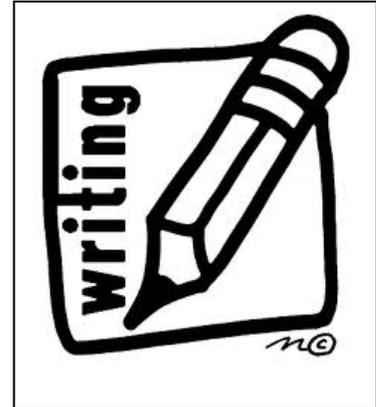
- Who’s narrating the story? What is the relationship between the narrator and the other characters?
- Who are the main characters? How do they change?
- What’s going on?
- What is the mood of the passage?
- Where does the action take place? What is the setting?
- What images recur throughout the story? How are they important?



When you are reading the nonfiction passages, ask yourself these questions:

- What is the main point of the passage?
- How does the author support the main idea?
- What is the author's point of view?

(Simon, 2010; Cracking the GED, 2010, p. 374).



5.4 Language Arts – Writing

The Language Arts, Writing test is divided into two parts. Part I is 50 multiple choice questions. You will have 75 minutes. Part II is writing an essay. You will have 45 minutes (Cracking the GED, 2010).

In Part I, the questions are aimed at evaluating your ability to revise and edit three types of documents, which are:

- **Workplace or community oriented documents.** This may include memos, reports, summaries, job applications and other business related correspondence.
- **“How to” texts – Directions or Instructions.** Understanding these types of documents require practical skills. This could include resume writing, how to act in a job interview, following transportation directions, etc.
- **Informational texts.** These texts have more specific topics and require analysis. They may require you to make critical evaluations, and to understand a passage supporting a specific cause or political view, such as global warming, etc.

Using these types of documents, you will be asked to:

- **Correct Sentences (45%)**
 - Organize sentences or paragraphs. You'll need to recognize when a new paragraph should begin, understand proper placement of sentences within paragraphs and even when a sentence should not be included at all.
 - Understand Sentence Structure. This requires you to find errors in sentence construction and asks you to form complete sentences.
 - Usage. You will be asked to use the different components of a sentence correctly. You will need to understand the parts of speech and how to use

them properly. You will need to be able to identify mistakes in verb tenses and noun-verb agreement, pronoun references, etc. You will be asked to demonstrate that you understand the rules of capitalization, punctuation, possessives, contractions and homonyms.

- **Sentence Revision (35%)**

Revision questions present a sentence with an underlined portion that may or may not contain an error. Revision questions test skills in the following three content areas:

- Sentence Structure
- Usage
- Mechanics

- **Construction Shift (20%)**

Construction shift questions present a sentence that must be rewritten by revising the sentence structure. This question tests your ability to manipulate sentence structures to create a better sentence. Organization construction shift questions may require you to combine paragraphs, separate paragraphs, or insert a new sentence within a paragraph. Construction shift questions test skills in two content areas:

- Organization
- Sentence Structure

(Marguiles & Blair, n.d, p. 6; Tyler, 2003).

5.4a Part II – The Essay

You will have 45 minutes to write your essay.

You will be provided with a single topic that will ask you to present an opinion or an explanation. The topics are chosen and based on situations that you are likely to have some experience with as an adult or general knowledge of (Tyler, 2003). The readers who will score your essay will be looking at the following features (Marguiles & Blair, n.d, p. 6):

- well-focused main points
- clear organization
- specific development of ideas
- control of sentence structure, punctuation, grammar, word choice, and spelling

5.4b GED Essay Scoring Rubric

This is the tool designed to help readers score the essay. Remember, an essay that does not directly address the given topic receives no score. You must receive an average score of 2 for the essay to be valid (Marguiles & Blair, n.d., p. 50).

	Effective 4	Adequate 3	Marginal 2	Inadequate 1
Response to prompt	Presents a clearly focused main idea that addresses the prompt	Uses the writing prompt to establish a main idea	Addresses the prompt, though the focus may shift	Attempts to address prompt but with little or no success in establishing a focus
Organization	Establishes a clear and logical organization	Uses an identifiable organizational plan	Shows some evidence of an organizational plan	Fails to organize ideas
Development and Details	Achieves coherent development with specific and relevant details and examples	Has focused but occasionally uneven development; incorporates some specific detail	Has some development but lacks specific details; may be limited to a listing, repetitions, or generalizations	Demonstrates little or no development, usually lacks details or examples or presents irrelevant information
Conventions of EAE (Edited American English)	Consistently controls sentence structure and the conventions of EAE	Generally controls sentence structure and the conventions of EAE	Demonstrates inconsistent control of sentence structure and the conventions of EAE	Exhibits minimal or no control of sentence structure and the conventions of EAE
Word Choice	Exhibits varied and precise word choice.	Exhibits appropriate word choice	Exhibits a narrow range of word choice, often including inappropriate selection	Exhibits weak and/or inappropriate words

5.5 Mathematics

Again, the Math test is divided into two parts. Part I is 25 questions and you can use a calculator. You will have 45 minutes. Part II is also 25 questions but you cannot use the calculator. You have 45 minutes. **There will be a list of formulas provided to you, so you do not have to memorize them.**

Remember, you cannot write in your test booklet, you will be allowed to use scratch paper to work on your problems. You should practice using scratch paper and numbering the problems so that if you have to return to a problem later you know where your previous work is on your scratch paper (Cracking the GED, 2010).

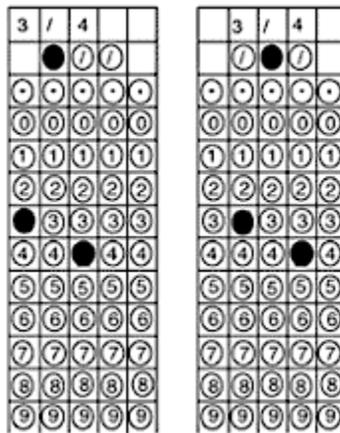
In Part I, the testing site will provide you with a calculator – you cannot use your own. In the second half of the test, you cannot use a calculator. The emphasis of both Part I and Part II is arithmetic problems. Many of the questions will be word problems. About half of the questions will be based on diagrams or charts. Most questions are multiple-choice; about ten are in an *alternate format*, shown on the next two pages (Cracking the GED, 2010).



Standard Grid

Instead of choosing from a group of answers, you must find the answer value and fill-in the answer in the bubbles in the Standard Grid provided. Notice that it allows for decimal or fractional answers. There are multiple ways to express the same value. As long as your answer is equivalent to the correct answer, it will be accepted as correct. For example, .75, 0.75, and $\frac{3}{4}$ are all equivalent and will be accepted, as long as you bubble it in correctly.

Standard Grid Diagram



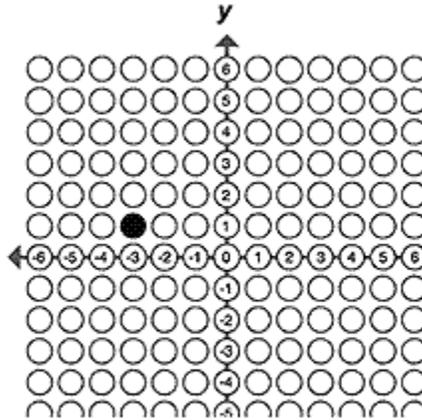
Standard Grid problems will never require you to enter a negative number.

Repeating decimals should be rounded off or converted into a fraction. $5.33333\dots$ could be 5.33 or $\frac{16}{3}$. If the number were something like 5.55666, however, you would round up and off to 5.56. As a general mathematical rule of thumb, you should round off to the nearest hundredth (the second number after the decimal).

Coordinate Plane Grid

To answer a graphing problem, you are given a coordinate plane grid. You will need to bubble in the space that corresponds to the coordinate (x,y) value of your answer. Only fill in one bubble; if you fill-in more than one you will not get the credit, even if one of the two answers is correct.

Coordinate Plane Grid Diagram



(GED for Free website, n.d.)

5.6 Science

**The Science test is 50 multiple choice questions.
You will have 80 minutes.**

The majority of the Science test will require you to analyze and apply information from paragraphs of text and to read charts, diagrams and illustrations (GED Basics, 2010). In the Science section, you will find short passages followed by a single question and longer passages followed by as many as five questions. About half the questions will be based on charts, diagrams, graphs or illustrations. You only need a general knowledge of scientific principles; usually, the answers can be determined by closely reading the paragraph or the graphics (Cracking the GED, 2010).

However, you should know some definitions and general knowledge, such as:

- Basic science terms, such as energy, gravity, density, and mass.
- Important theories and laws, such as the theory of evolution, the theory of plate tectonics and the laws of motion (Pass the GED: Science Test, 2003).



The Science test covers:

- **Life Sciences** – the scientific method, the biology of cells, plants, natural selection, the food chain and fossils. Basically, this is the study of living things, including us! This is about 45% of the test.
- **Physical Sciences** – solids, liquids, gasses; chemistry and physical laws. Basically, this is the study of how the world around you works. This is about 35% of the test.
- **Earth and Space Science** – the changing earth, glaciers, oceans, astronomy and the solar system. Basically, this focuses on what is going on in our planet and the solar system, near and far. This is about 20% of the test.

(Cracking the GED, 2010; GED for Free website, n.d.)

5.7 Social Studies

**The Social Studies test is 50 multiple choice questions.
You will have 70 minutes.**

Again, there will be a mixture of short passages followed by a single question and longer passages followed by 3 or 4 questions.



No outside knowledge is tested; this section does not test your recall of social studies facts, but evaluates your ability to use thinking skills to interpret social studies information. Being familiar with the highlights of U.S. and world history is helpful. However, typically you will find that the answers can be found by carefully reading the paragraph or the graphics.

Sixty percent of the questions will be based on tables, timelines, diagrams, graphs, photos and cartoons (Cracking the GED, 2010; Pass the GED, 2003).

The historic documents that most often appear on the GED are the U.S. Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. There may also be excerpts from famous political speeches or important U.S. Supreme Court decisions (Pass the GED: Social Studies Test, 2003).

The test covers:

- **History – U.S. and World History**
- **Civics and Government**
- **Economics**
- **Geography**

5.8 Taking Official GED Practice Tests

First of all – Practice Tests are FREE!!! So please take advantage of this preparation tool!

We have official GED practice tests. While there are other study tools and practice tests in books and online (several of which are included in this guide), the official practice tests undergo the same review process as the real tests, and are based on the same standard score scale; this ensures that these practice tests are the only accurate predictions of how well you are likely to do on the real test (Official GED Practice Tests Administrators' Manual, 2002).

Using practice tests as part of your preparation for the real tests is very important! Again, the Math and Language Arts, Writing test tend to be the most challenging, so we strongly recommend that when it is time, you take *at least one* of these practice tests before the real thing, two would be even better. Taking a practice test for each subject increases your chances of success (McLaughlin, Skaggs & Patterson, 2009).

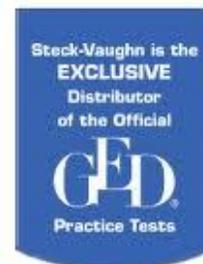
Talk to your Coordinator; together you can decide when you might be ready to start taking practice tests and what subject you should start with. Typically, you will take the Social Studies, Science or Reading test as your first practice tests.

Practice tests let you know approximately what your score would be if you took that test right then. The test you sit down to take at the testing site will be different, but the practice test gives you a lot of good feedback. They can help you identify what kinds of questions are most challenging for you. Do you understand how to find the important information in graphs? Graphs will be used in the Science, Social Studies and Math tests. Do you understand how to interpret the political cartoons in the Social Studies test? These are just some examples of areas you might be good at or might need to improve; the practice tests can help you figure out your strengths and your weaknesses. And that can help you focus your studies on the areas you want to improve (George & Schaefer, 2002).

Make arrangements with your Coordinator to take practice tests outside of regular class times.

How long do practice tests take?

We have two versions – full-length and half-length. The full length tests take the full time, so anywhere from 65' to 120'. The half-length tests take half the time; except for Part II of the Writing test; on Part II you still have the full 45' to write your essay.



5.9 Test Taking Tips

Studying and knowing the material that you will be tested on for the GED improves your chances of being successful. But to do well on a standardized test, you need to know how to take one – it will also measure your test-taking skills.



Most of the questions on the GED are multiple-choice; that means you have to choose the best answer from the five possibilities.

- **Read the question first and make sure you understand it.**

Before you read a long passage, it is often helpful to look at the questions you will be asked. If you are familiar with the questions, you can read the passage in a more directed way. Sometimes, in the Language Arts, Reading and Writing, there are questions based on specific lines in the text, called “line numbering” (Pass the GED: Language Arts, Reading Test, 2003, p.1) Read the question, but not the possible answers; then go directly to those lines to find the answer to the question (GED Basics, 2010). You may need to read a few lines before and after the lines the question refers to, but often you can answer that specific question without reading the entire passage.

- **Try to answer the question in your own words before you read the possible answers.**

If you can answer the question in your own words, then you just have to choose the answer that is closest to your answer. This will save you time; you will not have to try to understand the other choices, which can be confusing and irrelevant (GED Basics, 2010).

- **Focus on the main idea of the passage.**

Generally, the correct answer is embedded in or related to the passage’s main idea (GED Basics, 2010).

- **Read all the possible answers carefully.**

Never select a final answer until you have read all five options carefully. The first answer may seem right, but by reading farther you might discover an answer that is a *better* choice (GED Basics, 2010).

- **Skip it if you need to.**

If you read a question and you are not immediately sure how to do it, put a small mark on your answer sheet next to the number of the question and move on. You can come back to it later, because it will require more time; it is better for you to move on and work on the questions you do understand how to answer first. Sometimes, by proceeding with other questions, you will find a hint to the question you did not understand.

It is likely you will have time to come back and work on the question later. If you do run out of time to spend on the question, then you should make sure you leave enough time to go back and fill in an answer for all the questions you may have skipped (Cracking the GED, 2010; Simon, 2010; GED Basics, 2010).

- **Process of Elimination.**

You know there is only one *best* answer; you can usually eliminate at least one answer that you instinctively know is wrong or illogical. Many of the questions will have at least two choices that either contradict the test or are off topic, meaning they are not relevant to the topic or question (GED Basics, 2010).

Again, you are not penalized for wrong answers. That means you want to provide an answer for every question on the test – even if you have to guess! But you can do a better job guessing if you use the Process of Elimination (POE).

Often, wrong answers are easier to see than the right answer. Sometimes they are logically impossible; sometimes they just seem “weird.” You will rarely be able to eliminate all the wrong answers, but often you will be able to eliminate 2 or 3 answers. Every time you eliminate one of the answers you increase your odds of guessing the correct answer (Cracking the GED, 2010).

- **Leave enough time to review your answers.**

This could mean going back to the questions you skipped or questions you were unsure about. Try to allow about 5 minutes for this (GED Basics, 2010).

- **Answer every question! Even if you have to guess!**

As stated above, you only get scored on the questions you get right – so guess! You just might be correct (GED Basics, 2010).

5. 10 Specific Test Taking Tips by Subject

5.10a Language Arts, Reading

- Some test takers are intimidated by poems. The best strategy with poems, if it is pretty short, is read it twice;
- Remember, one passage will be a business document, such as a manual, memo or application (Cracking the GED, 2010).

5.10b Language Arts, Writing

There are 3 possible formats for the essay:

- Two views are presented and you are asked to pick one and support it;
- A single view is presented, and you are asked if you agree or disagree;
- You are asked to come up with a single example of a phenomenon described in the question and then explain your choice.

The two readers of your essay will be looking for:

- Organization – a framework that gives the essay form;
- Support – specific and compelling examples or evidence (Cracking the GED, 2010).

5.10c Math

Do each section in two passes:

- The first time through the test, do the problems you know immediately how to do;
- On the second pass, work on the problems you aren't sure of.

Look out for partial answers – answers that are only part of the way to the actual solution.

Look out for pieces of information in the problem that aren't necessary for its solution.

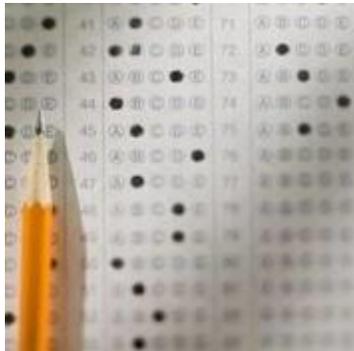
In this section, Process of Elimination can help you eliminate answers that are “out of the ballpark” (Cracking the GED, 2010, p. 522).

5.10d Science

It might be helpful to spend some time reading articles from the magazines the GED test writers claim they read when writing questions: “Discover, Science News, National Geographic and Popular Science.” Reading articles from these magazines can help you get familiar with the kind of scientific writing that is used on the test (Cracking the GED, 2010, p. 332). You can also watch science shows on TV, Netflix, Hulu or elsewhere on the internet. There are even a lot of short videos on Youtube.com. If you have kids, help them with their science homework or experiments (Pass the GED: Science Test, 2003).

5.10e Social Studies

Remember that some questions will be based on cartoons or photographs. To answer these questions, first look at the graphic and read any accompanying captions carefully. Try to understand its overall intent and meaning. Also, important information may be included in the question itself (Cracking the GED, 2010; GED Basics, 2010).



General Tips

- Get a good night’s sleep.
- Eat your usual breakfast, not so much you get sleepy. You might be a little nervous, so don’t eat anything “special” – it might not agree with you!
- If you are taking more than one test, bring a snack.
- Allow extra time to get to the testing site and get there early.
- Bring at least 2 pencils.
- Wear a watch or sit where you can see the clock (Simon, 2010).

6. Free Online Preparation Programs & Tools

There are many online resources for studying and taking practice tests. They are offered by a number of non-profit and for-profit organizations. There are many sites that you can access at no cost and without “signing up” or giving the company any personal information. Below is a breakdown of sites, some by test subject, for you to add to your MLC studies if you find it helpful.

6.1 Skills Tutor

MLC offers an online program from the Minnesota Department of Adult Basic Education as a supplemental learning tool to students registered for GED classes. Skills Tutor (www.skillstutor.com) is designed to help students master foundational skills in reading, language arts, math, science, and workforce skills. The Skills Tutor program is used as a distance learning (DL) tool and to help students prepare for the GED (http://www.themlc.org/Skills_Tutor_Webinar.html).



6.2 Online Tools – Reading

Study Guides

http://higher.ed.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0809222310/	McGraw-Hill Online Learning Center
http://www.waybuilder.net/free-ed/ged/connections/LangArts_Reading.asp	GED Prep Express
http://www.gedforfree.com/free-ged-course/ged-reading.html	GED for Free
http://www.rocketreader.com/newsletter/newsletter.html	RocketReader Newsletter

Practice Tests

http://higher.ed.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0809222310/student_view0/ged_practice_test.html	McGraw-Hill Online Learning Center
http://www.gedprepinfo.com/ged-language-reading-practice.htm	GED Prep Info
http://www.4tests.com/exams/examdetail.asp?eid=38	4Tests.com

6.3 Online Tools – Writing

Study Guides

http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0809222280/	McGraw-Hill Online Learning Center
http://abeged.com/GED/GED-LA-MostMissed-200703.pdf	Most Missed Questions Study Guide
http://www.waybuilder.net/free-ed/ged/connections/LangArts_Writing.asp	Free Education Network
http://www.gedforfree.com/free-ged-course/ged-language-arts.html	GED for Free

Practice Tests

http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0809222280/student_view0/ged_practice_test_pt_i.html	McGraw-Hill Online Learning Center
http://www.gedprepinfo.com/ged-language-practice.htm	GED Prep Info
http://www.4tests.com/exams/examdetail.asp?eid=38	4Tests.com

Other Tools Related to Writing Well

http://www.gedforfree.com/free-ged-course/language-arts/most-commonly-misspelled-ged-words.html	Help with Spelling
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/engagement/2/52/ Helps you organize your thoughts around a prompt. It's fun and helpful!	GED Essay Game
http://www.studyguidezone.com/ged_writing.htm Read and correct other students' essays	Assess Student Writing

6.4 Online Tools – Mathematics

Study Guides

http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0809222329/student_view0/	McGraw-Hill Online Learning Center
http://www.shoreline.edu/callab/GED/GED_math.htm	Shoreline Community College
http://www.gedforfree.com/free-ged-course/ged-math.html	GED for Free

Practice Tests

http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0809222329/student_view0/ged_practice_test.html	McGraw-Hill Online Learning Center
http://www.gedprepinfo.com/ged-mathematics-practice.htm	GED Prep Info
http://www.4tests.com/exams/examdetail.asp?eid=38	4Tests.com

6.5 Online Tools – Science

Study Guides

http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0809222302/student_view0/	McGraw-Hill Online Learning Center
http://www.gedforfree.com/free-ged-course/ged-science.html	GED for Free

Practice Tests

http://www.4tests.com/exams/examdetail.asp?eid=38	4Tests.com
http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0809222302/student_view0/ged_practice_test.html	McGraw-Hill Online Learning Center

6.6 Online Tools – Social Studies

Study Guides

http://www.gedprepinfo.com/ged-social-studies-practice.htm	GED Prep Info
http://www.gedforfree.com/free-ged-course/ged-social-studies.html	GED for Free

Practice Tests

http://www.4tests.com/exams/examdetail.asp?eid=38	4Tests.com
http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0809222299/student_view0/ged_practice_test.html	McGraw-Hill Online Learning Center

7. Appendix: Learner Resources

7.1 MLC Centers

MLC has five Adult Learning Centers in Minneapolis and Saint Paul that offer ESL, GED and citizenship classes. Check the website or call for class times.

MLC Learning Centers	Location	Programs Offered	Website	Address	Phone Number
Arlington Hills	St. Paul's East Side	ESL, Job Search Skills	http://www.themlc.org/fwe.html	Arlington Hills Lutheran Church 1115 Greenbrier Street St. Paul, MN 55106	651-793-4423
Lake Street	South Minneapolis	GED , ESL, Computer Classes	http://www.themlc.org/Hiawatha_Lake_Learning_Center.html	2700 East Lake Street, Suite 2500 Minneapolis, MN 55406	612-483-1763
Northeast	Northeast Minneapolis	ESL	http://www.themlc.org/nslc.html	Northeast Trinity United Methodist Church 2511 Taylor Street NE Minneapolis, MN 55418	612-789-9024
North Side	North Minneapolis	ESL, GED	http://www.themlc.org/emlc.html	Sumner Library 611 Van White Memorial Boulevard Minneapolis, MN 55411	612-377-5399
Rondo Library	St. Paul's Frogtown	ESL, GED	http://www.themlc.org/MLC_Lea_rning_Center_Rondo.html	461 Dale Street North St. Paul, MN 55103	651-266-7421

7.2 Where to Take the GED Tests

At some locations, you can register on the same day that you test. Some locations require advance registration. Please contact the test site you are interested in to verify their requirements. It is also recommended that you take the test at the same location until you have completed your GED. The registration fee is unlikely to transfer from one testing agency to another. It may be possible to transfer locations if within the same agency. Please contact the test site directly to verify their policy.

GED Test Site	Address	Cost	Contact Information
Minneapolis ABE - Southside Adult Education Center http://abe.mpls.k12.mn.us/	2225 E Lake St Minneapolis, MN 55407	\$75 – Cash. \$95 if paid by agency. \$20 retest.	Jackie McClees Head GED Examiner (612) 668-3810 jackie.mcclees@mpls.k12.mn.us
Minneapolis ABE - Northside AEC http://abe.mpls.k12.mn.us/	1500 James Ave N Door #1 Minneapolis, MN 55411	\$75 – Cash. \$95 if paid by agency. \$20 retest.	Marian Santucci Program Assistant (612) 668-1863 marian.santucci@mpls.k12.mn.us
Adult Options In Education (AOIE)	Eisenhower Community Ctr 1001 Hwy 7 Room 228 Hopkins, MN 55305	\$90 – Cash, Money order, check. \$120 if paid by agency. \$20 retest.	Margaret Genereux Lead Teacher (952) 988-5343 margaret_genereux@hopkins.k12.mn.us
Adult Options In Education (AOIE)	Buffalo High School 877 Bison Blvd. Buffalo, MN 55313 953-988-5340	Same as above.	
Hubbs Center http://ged.spps.org/officialtesting.html	1030 W University Ave Saint Paul, MN 55104 651-290-4822	\$75 – Check. \$95 if non-resident or paid by agency. \$20 retest.	Amy Stotzheim Chief GED Examiner 651-290-4779 amy.stotzheim@spps.org
SHAPE (South Hennepin Adult Programs in Education) http://www.shapeschool.info/SHAPE/South_Hennepin_Adult_Programs_in_Education.html	2575 W 88th St, #340 Bloomington, MN 55431 952-681-6170	\$75 – Cash, Money order.	Becky Smith Information Desk Secretary 952-681-6170 bsmith@bloomington.k12.mn.us
Mounds View ABE http://www2.moundsviewschools.org/communityed/index.asp?ID=1798&pID=&level2=&level3=	Pike Lake Education Center 2101 NW 14th St New Brighton, MN 55112 651-621-7410	Please call for details.	Brent Olinger Manager at Mounds View (651) 621-7409 brent.olinger@moundsviewschools.org

7.3 Library Resources

There are many libraries located throughout the Twin Cities Metro area. Get a library card and take advantage of what your local libraries have to offer!

- Internet access for email and job searching;
- Word processing for resumes, cover letters, or writing letters;
- Check out books, audiobooks, eBooks, music CDs and DVDs;
- Take a class: beginning and/or intermediate computer classes, some locations also have basic computer classes in Spanish, Somali and/or Hmong;
- Other events are scheduled throughout the year;
- Some locations offer homework help or one-on-one tutoring.

St. Paul & Ramsey County have 14 libraries: <http://www.sppl.org/> and <http://www.rclreads.org/>

Minneapolis & Hennepin County have 41 libraries: <http://www.mplib.org/>

7.4 Adult Literacy Hotline

The Hotline is where you or a friend can call to find out about English classes (ESL) or to get help to read and write better. There are more than 425 programs around Minnesota and the Hotline can put you in touch with one that is right for you! The programs that you might be interested in include:

- Basic reading, writing, and math classes
- English language classes (ESL) and conversation classes
- GED preparation, practice tests and testing sites
- Adult high school diploma programs
- Citizenship classes
- Brush-up skills classes
- Family literacy programs



Do you know someone who might be interested in free classes? The Hotline is staffed from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday. If you call after hours, please leave a message with your name and phone number – speak slowly – and we will get back to you the next business day.

Call us today at **1-800-222-1990** or send a text message to **612-424-1211**.

If you would like to get started on finding classes, go to:

http://www.themlc.org/Online_Search_2.html

7.5 Age Waiver Information

<http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/groups/InformationTech/documents/Memo/015796.pdf>

Age Waiver for General Educational Development (GED) Testing

Residents of Minnesota between the ages of 16 and 18 may take the GED tests if they qualify for an Age Waiver. You must apply for an age waiver using the form provided by the Minnesota GED Office. Approved forms must be presented at an Official Testing Center before you will be allowed to test. Age waiver applicants must not be enrolled in high school.

There are six possible ways for an applicant to qualify for an age waiver. An applicant needs to meet ONE of the following six conditions:

1. Applicant has been dropped from the school's attendance rolls for at least one full calendar year.
2. Applicant's high school class has graduated.
3. A prospective employer indicates on signed/dated letterhead that applicant must successfully complete the GED Battery to qualify for employment.
4. A prospective postsecondary institution or financial aid office indicates on signed/dated letterhead that applicant must successfully complete the GED Battery to qualify for acceptance or to begin the financial aid process.
5. The military indicates on signed/dated letterhead that applicant must successfully complete the GED Battery to qualify for acceptance.
6. An Adult Basic Education (ABE) program or other recognized educational, social service, or correctional agency indicates that successful completion of the GED Test Battery is a part of the applicant's written individual learning plan, AND also provides documentation showing the applicant has taken at least three of the five Official GED Practice Tests with a standard score of at least 500 on each. Official Practice Tests are available from all Minnesota ABE programs.

7.6 Request Your Transcript

GED Records Request Form and Instructions

http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Learning_Support/Adult_Basic_Education_GED/GED/index.html

After you pass the GED, you may need transcripts to give to an employer, a postsecondary educational institution or for the military. You will find the form to request your GED records at the above website. The form includes the phone number and address, as well as the fax number where you can fax the form. Please read the instructions carefully.

Most postsecondary educational institutions, employers and the military require only the transcript. **However, many postsecondary institutions want an *Official Transcript*.** You can specify that in your request and the GED Office will provide a transcript in a sealed envelope with an inked message over the seal indicating it is an Official Transcript if not opened prior to receipt.

TO REQUEST A TRANSCRIPT, complete the Record Request Form (see link below) and fax it to the GED Office at 651-582-8458. If you wish to complete the form electronically, use the Word Version and print the completed form so you can sign it. Then you may scan it and send it as an email attachment to alice.smith@state.mn.us.

7.7 Other Related Online Tools

There are many helpful sites online to help you plan your educational future, to consider different career paths, to apply for a job and to connect with possible employers.

iSeek

<http://www.iseek.org/>

This website is “Minnesota’s career, education and job resource.” The site offers self-assessment tools and help with goal setting. You can investigate how to prepare for, to apply for and to pay for college. You can explore the job market and hundreds of careers.

eFolioMinnesota

<http://www.efoliominnesota.com/>

This website is free to all Minnesota residents; it is a “Web-based portfolio designed to help you create a living showcase of your education, career, and personal achievements.”

Minnesota Workforce Center

http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/JobSeekers/WorkForce_Centers/index.aspx

This site offers help to job seekers to look for employment. They can also help anyone at any stage explore and plan careers. They offer job fairs, classes on resume writing and interview skills, and have several locations across the metro area.

Twin Cities Rise!

<http://www.twincitiesrise.org/>

Twin Cities RISE! Core Program develops work skills and leadership, leading to finding a living wage career at a local company. The curriculum is based on input from hiring partners and the expertise of adult education and training professionals. The curriculum includes: work skills training, personal empowerment, one-on-one coaching and employment placement.

Get a FREE email account

These days, looking for and applying for jobs usually requires you to be on the internet. Often, you have to submit applications online and you may also need to email a potential employer. So, be ready! Sign-up for a free email account! Two free accounts are offered by Google and Yahoo: gmail and ymail.

To set-up an account, get online and search for gmail or ymail. Setting up the account is easy. You are able to choose your email address. Since you might be using this address for professional correspondence, try to choose an email address that is easy to remember and relates to you. You can use all or part of your name; if you do not want to use your name, you could use initials and numbers: JohnSmith11@gmail.com or js117@gmail.com or jts45@ymail.com. When you type in what you would like your address to be, the site will let you know if that name is available. Sometimes your first choice is not available (because someone already has that address) and you will have to choose a different address. Also, choose something you can remember and is easy to tell people, in person or over the phone.



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