



## Score Scale and Content Descriptions for the GED® tests

### FIFTH TEST SERIES: 2014 - Present

#### Score Scale:

In 2014, the fifth test series is being released and is reported on a score scale of 100 to 200, with the passing standard set at a scaled score of 150 for each of the four content area modules. The compensatory model for determining the battery passing that was present in the fourth test series has now been eliminated. Instead, the 2014 GED® test uses a simpler system in which obtaining the passing score on any individual content area module is sufficient to count towards passing the overall test battery. Passing the all four content area modules results in the achievement of a high school equivalency credential. In contrast, the system used for the fourth test series provided that a minimum score for each module needed to be attained, but then a higher average score across all five of the modules was required in order to pass the total test battery. For the fifth test series, the minimum battery passing score for high school equivalency is simply the sum of the passing scores of 150 on each of the modules: a total battery score of 600.

In addition to providing evidence of high school equivalency, the fifth test edition also has a second cut score on each content area module. This second cut score is called the GED® Score with Honors. It is set at 170 scaled score points on each content area module and is a measure of a test-taker's readiness for career and college in the particular content area in which the test-taker receives this higher score.

#### Content Descriptions:

The fifth test series consists of four content area modules, each covering the range of content described below and aligned with with career- and college-readiness standards

- Reasoning Through Language Arts is an integrated test of English language arts and reasoning that focuses on three essential groupings of skills: close reading of complex texts, clear writing (particularly of argument-based writing), and editing, understanding and using standard written English in context. Test items are based on texts reflecting a range of complexity, including texts at the career- and college-readiness level. Informational texts (including nonfiction drawn from the science and the social studies content areas as well as a range of texts from workplace contexts) make up 75% of the source material while the remainder is drawn from literature. This emphasis on informational text is intended to reflect the importance of being able to read and understand these types of documents in the workplace and in postsecondary education.
- Mathematical Reasoning focuses on two major content domains: quantitative problem solving and algebraic problem solving. The module aims to strike a balance between assessing a test-taker's deeper conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency with numeracy and mathematics and assessing the test-taker's ability to apply these fundamentals in realistic situations. This content area module also integrates the assessment of the content described above with the assessment of the following mathematical practices: mathematical fluency, abstracting problems, building solution pathways and lines of reasoning, furthering lines of reasoning, and evaluating reasoning and solution pathways.
- Science focuses on the application of scientific reasoning skills. These skills are enumerated in the following Science Practices: comprehending scientific presentations, investigation design (experimental and observational), reasoning from data, evaluating conclusions with evidence, working with findings, expressing scientific information, working with scientific theories, and applying concepts of probability and statistics in a scientific context. These science practices are assessed in the context of three core science content domains: life science, physical science, and earth and space science. Stimulus materials reflect both academic and workplace contexts.
- Social Studies focuses on the application of reasoning skills in a social sciences context. These skills are enumerated in the following Social Studies Practices: drawing conclusions and making inferences; determining central ideas, hypotheses and conclusions; analyzing events and ideas; interpreting meaning of symbols, words and phrases; analyzing purpose and point of view; integrating content presented in different ways; evaluating reasoning and evidence; analyzing relationships between texts; writing analytic responses to source texts; reading and interpreting graphs, charts and other data representations; and measuring the center of a statistical dataset. These social studies practices are assessed in the context of four core social studies content domains: civics and government, United States history, economics, and geography and the world. Stimulus materials are primarily drawn from a variety of primary and secondary source documents.

### FOURTH TEST SERIES: 2001 – 2013

#### Score Scale:

In 2002, the fourth test series was released and used a standard score range of 200 to 800 with a mean of 500 and a standard deviation of 100. At the same time, the new U.S. and IAFAS minimum score requirement was raised – for the third time in its history – to “410 AND 450,” meaning that test-takers were required to earn both 1. a standard score of 410 or above on each of the five tests in the battery, AND 2. an average standard score of 450 or above on the five tests in the

battery. Note: Canada's requirement on the Fourth Series is a 450 minimum score on both the individual content area tests and an average for all five tests in the battery. The Fourth Series is being continued in 2014 and beyond in certain locations and settings, and the passing standard will remain at the "410 and 450" standard everywhere except Canada, where it will remain at the 450 minimum standard.

#### Content Descriptions:

- Language Arts, Reading: Demonstration of essential reading skills in the following areas: comprehending, analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing workplace and literary texts
- Language Arts, Writing: Demonstration of essential skills in the following areas: using the elements of standard English to edit workplace and informational documents and to generate well-organized and developed written text
- Mathematics: Demonstration of skill in the following areas: understanding and interpreting mathematical concepts in algebra, data analysis, statistics, geometry, and number operations applied to visual and written text from academic and workplace contexts
- Science: Demonstration of essential skills in the following areas: understanding, interpreting, and applying concepts of life, earth and space sciences, physics, and chemistry to visual and written text from academic and workplace contexts
- Social Studies: Demonstration of essential skills in the following areas: understanding, interpreting, and applying key history, geography, economics, and civics concepts and principles to visual and written text from academic and workplace contexts

## THIRD TEST SERIES: 1988 - 2001

#### Score Scale:

From 1988 to 1997 the passing standard continued at the "40 or 45" standard, meaning that test-takers were required to earn either:

1. a standard score of 40 or above on each of the five tests in the battery, OR
2. an average standard score of 45 or above on the five tests in the battery.

Beginning in 1997 and continuing through the end of the Third Series in 2001, the nationwide minimum score requirement was raised – for only the second time in its history – to "40 AND 45," meaning that test-takers were required to earn both:

1. a standard score of 40 or above on each of the five tests in the battery, AND
2. an average standard score of 45 or above on the five tests in the battery.

#### Content Descriptions:

- Writing Skills: Part 1: Sentence Structure, Mechanics. Part 2: Essay
- Social Studies: History, Economics, Political Science, Behavioral Science, Geography
- Science: Life Sciences: Biology. Physical Sciences: Earth Science, Physics, Chemistry
- Interpreting Literature and the Arts: Popular Literature, Classical Literature, Commentary
- Mathematics: Measurement, Number Relationships and Data Analysis, Algebra, Geometry

## SECOND TEST SERIES: 1978 – 1987

#### Score Scale:

For the first three years of the 1978 test series (1978, 1979, and 1980), the passing standard remained at the "35 OR 45" standard. That is, the candidate earned either:

1. a standard score of 35 or above on each of the five tests in the battery, OR
2. an average standard score of 45 on the five tests in the battery.

Some states required both—as in "35 AND 45." Still others chose to establish one specific score requirement such as a minimum of 40 on each test.

In 1981, the Commission on Educational Credit and Credentials (the parent commission of GED Testing Service) elevated the recommendation to a minimum requirement, that the candidate earn either:

1. a standard score of 40 or above on each of the five tests in the battery, OR
2. an average standard score of 45 or above on the five tests in the battery.

This was the "40 OR 45" standard. This permitted the continuation of the "35 AND 45" standard (at least 35 on every test, with an average of 45 on all tests) set by most U.S. states at the time. As an example of the variety in passing standards set by the jurisdictions, the Technical Manual for the 1988 series GED Tests listed 27 states, the District of Columbia, and 4 other jurisdictions as implementing the "35 AND 45" standard. Other combinations of score requirements included: 40 minimum score (1), 40 OR 45 (6), 40 OR 50 (2); 45 average (1); 402 This was the "40 OR 45" standard. This permitted the continuation of the "35 AND 45" standard (at least 35 on every test, with an average of 45 on all tests) set by most U.S. states at the time. As an example of the variety in passing standards set by the jurisdictions, the Technical Manual for the 1988 series GED Tests listed 27 states, the District of Columbia, and 4 other jurisdictions as implementing the "35 AND 45" standard. Other combinations of score requirements included: 40 minimum score (1); 40 OR 45 (6); 40 OR 50 (2); 45 average (1); 40 AND 45 (16); 40 AND 50 (1), and 42, 45, 45 AND 45 (1). Canada's jurisdictions chose higher minimums: 40 AND 45 (1), and 45 minimum (9).

The new standard was in place from 1981 through the end of the Second Series in 1987.

**Content Descriptions:**

- Writing Skills: Part 1: Sentence Structure, Mechanics. Part 2: Essay
- Social Studies: History, Economics, Political Science, Behavioral Science, Geography
- Science: Life Sciences: Biology. Physical Sciences: Earth Science, Physics, Chemistry
- Interpreting Literature and the Arts: Popular Literature, Classical Literature, Commentary
- Mathematics: Measurement, Number Relationships and Data Analysis, Algebra, Geometry

**FIRST TEST SERIES: 1943 – 1977****Score Scale:**

For most of its history, the GED test standard score scale ranged from 20 to 80 with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10. From 1943 to 1976, the Commission on Accreditation recommended that a high school or state (jurisdiction) should grant a GED credential if an otherwise-qualified GED examinee met the "35 OR 45" standard. That is, the candidate earned either:

1. a standard score of 35 or above on each of the five tests in the battery, OR
2. an average standard score of 45 on the five tests in the battery.

Some states required both—as in "35 AND 45." Still others chose to establish one specific score requirement such as a minimum of 40 on each test.

**Content Descriptions:**

- Correctness and Effectiveness of Expression
- Interpretation of Reading Materials in the Social Studies
- Interpretation of Reading Materials in the Natural Sciences
- Interpretation of Literary Materials
- General Mathematic Ability

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