

Making Everything Easier!™

GED® RLA Test

FOR
DUMMIES®
A Wiley Brand

Learn:

- **Methods to sharpen your reading and language skills**
- **How to approach the GED Reasoning Through Language Arts test question types and formats**
- **To work through test questions with practice problems and study exercises**
- **How you measure up by taking a full-length practice test**

Achim Krull, BA, MAT

Murray Shukyn

Long-time education and test-preparation experts

GED® is a registered trademark of the American Council on Education and administered exclusively by GED Testing Service, LLC under license. This material is not endorsed or approved by ACE or GED Testing Service.





**by Murray Shukyn, BA, and
Achim K. Krull, BA, MAT**



GED® RLA Test For Dummies®

Published by: **John Wiley & Sons, Inc.**, 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774, www.wiley.com

Copyright © 2015 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey

Published simultaneously in Canada

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the Publisher. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

Trademarks: Wiley, For Dummies, the Dummies Man logo, Dummies.com, Making Everything Easier, and related trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc., and may not be used without written permission. The 2014 GED® Test Item Samplers are the intellectual property of GED Testing Service LLC. ©2014 GED Testing Service LLC. All rights reserved. GED® and GED Testing Service® are registered trademarks of the American Council on Education (ACE). They may not be reproduced without the express written permission of ACE or GED Testing Service. The GED® and GED Testing Service® brands are administered by GED Testing Service LLC under license from American Council on Education. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

LIMIT OF LIABILITY/DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY: WHILE THE PUBLISHER AND AUTHOR HAVE USED THEIR BEST EFFORTS IN PREPARING THIS BOOK, THEY MAKE NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS BOOK AND SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIM ANY IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. NO WARRANTY MAY BE CREATED OR EXTENDED BY SALES REPRESENTATIVES OR WRITTEN SALES MATERIALS. THE ADVICE AND STRATEGIES CONTAINED HEREIN MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR YOUR SITUATION. YOU SHOULD CONSULT WITH A PROFESSIONAL WHERE APPROPRIATE. NEITHER THE PUBLISHER NOR THE AUTHOR SHALL BE LIABLE FOR DAMAGES ARISING HEREFROM.

For general information on our other products and services, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 877-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002. For technical support, please visit www.wiley.com/techsupport.

Wiley publishes in a variety of print and electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some material included with standard print versions of this book may not be included in e-books or in print-on-demand. If this book refers to media such as a CD or DVD that is not included in the version you purchased, you may download this material at <http://booksupport.wiley.com>. For more information about Wiley products, visit www.wiley.com.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2015946516

ISBN 978-1-119-03005-8 (pbk); ISBN 978-1-119-03007-2 (ebk); ISBN 978-1-119-03006-5 (ebk)

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents at a Glance

<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Part I: Getting Started with the GED RLA Test</i>	5
Chapter 1: Taking a Quick Glance at the GED RLA Test	7
Chapter 2: Prepping for the RLA Test	15
Chapter 3: Uncovering Your Strengths and Weaknesses with a Diagnostic Test	27
Chapter 4: Succeeding on the GED RLA Test	51
<i>Part II: Enhancing Your RLA Skills</i>	61
Chapter 5: Understanding the Written Word	63
Chapter 6: Analyzing Arguments and Weighing Evidence	93
Chapter 7: Mastering Language Conventions and Usage	119
Chapter 8: Penning Powerful Prose for the Extended Response	151
<i>Part III: Putting Your RLA Knowledge and Skills to the Test</i>	171
Chapter 9: Taking an RLA Practice Test	173
Chapter 10: Answers and Explanations for the RLA Practice Test	193
<i>Part IV: The Part of Tens</i>	201
Chapter 11: Ten Tips for Faster Reading and Improved Comprehension	203
Chapter 12: Avoiding Ten Tricky Writing Errors	211
<i>Index</i>	217

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
About This Book.....	1
Foolish Assumptions.....	2
Icons Used in This Book.....	2
Beyond the Book.....	2
Where to Go from Here.....	3
Part 1: Getting Started with the GED RLA Test	5
Chapter 1: Taking a Quick Glance at the GED RLA Test	7
Knowing What to Expect: The GED Test Format.....	7
Reviewing the GED RLA Test.....	8
It's a Date: Scheduling the Test.....	9
Determining whether you're eligible.....	10
Recognizing when you can take the test.....	10
Signing up.....	12
Working with unusual circumstances.....	12
Taking the GED Test When English Isn't Your First Language.....	12
Taking Aim at Your Target Score.....	13
Identifying how scores are determined.....	14
Knowing what to do if you score poorly on one or more tests.....	14
Chapter 2: Prepping for the RLA Test	15
Grasping What's on the Grammar and Writing Component.....	15
Looking at the skills the grammar and writing component covers.....	16
Understanding the format of the grammar and writing component.....	17
Rocking the Reading Comprehension Component.....	17
Checking out the skills required for the reading component.....	18
Breaking down the format of the reading component.....	18
Identifying the types of passages and how to prepare for them.....	19
Literary passages.....	19
Nonfiction passages.....	19
Examining the Extended Response Item.....	20
Eyeing the skills covered in the Extended Response.....	21
Understanding the Extended Response format.....	21
Planning to succeed on the Extended Response.....	22
Preparing for the RLA Test with Tactics That Work.....	23
Sharpening your reading and writing skills.....	23
Navigating text to comprehend.....	25
Chapter 3: Uncovering Your Strengths and Weaknesses with a Diagnostic Test	27
Taking the Diagnostic Test.....	27
Answer Sheet for RLA Diagnostic Test.....	28
Reasoning Through Language Arts Diagnostic Test.....	29
The Extended Response.....	40
Reviewing Answers and Explanations.....	44
Sample Extended Response.....	49
Scoring Your Extended Response.....	50

Chapter 4: Succeeding on the GED RLA Test	51
Gearing Up for Test Time	51
Using the Diagnostic and Practice Tests to Your Advantage	52
Packing for Test Day	53
Getting Comfortable before the Test Begins.....	54
Brushing Up on Test-Taking Strategies	54
Watching the clock: Using your time wisely	55
Evaluating the different questions.....	56
Analysis	56
Application.....	57
Comprehension	57
Synthesis	57
Evaluation	57
Cognitive skills	58
Addressing and answering questions	58
Guess for success: Using intelligent guessing.....	58
Leaving time for review.....	59
Sharpening Your Mental Focus.....	59

Part II: Enhancing Your RLA Skills 61

Chapter 5: Understanding the Written Word.....	63
Recognizing and Ordering the Sequence of Events	63
Drawing Inferences.....	65
Plot.....	65
Setting.....	66
Characters	66
Ideas	68
Analyzing Relationships among Ideas	69
Sequence.....	69
Connection.....	69
Cause and effect.....	70
Conclusion	70
Deriving Meaning from Context.....	71
Figuring Out the Function of Details	72
Comparing Points of View	74
Determining the author's point of view	75
Analyzing the author's response to opposing viewpoints	76
Appreciating the Importance of Word Choice.....	78
Tuning in to variations in meaning and tone	78
Word choice for overall effect.....	78
Meaning and tone.....	79
Interpreting figurative language.....	80
Extracting Meaning from Flow	81
Taking a big picture look at meaning and flow	82
Recognizing the parts of the whole.....	83
Analyzing the transitions that tie it all together	83
Comparing Two Passages.....	85
Analyzing differences in perspective, tone, style, structure, purpose, and impact.....	86
Perspective	86
Tone	87
Style	87
Purpose	87
Structure	88
Impact.....	88

Analyzing passages that present related ideas or themes	89
Scope	90
Purpose	90
Emphasis	91
Audience.....	91
Impact.....	92
Chapter 6: Analyzing Arguments and Weighing Evidence	93
Identifying and Summarizing the Main Idea	93
Inferring the main idea from details	96
Drawing generalizations and hypotheses from the evidence	96
Digging into the Details.....	99
Summarizing details	99
Following the train of thought.....	99
Distinguishing between supported and unsupported claims	100
Spotting valid and invalid reasoning.....	102
Analyzing the evidence	104
Is the evidence relevant?.....	104
Is the evidence sufficient?.....	106
What evidence was ignored?	106
Analyze data, graphs, and pictures used as evidence	107
Rooting Out Premises and Assumptions	110
Finding the premise on which the argument is based.....	110
Identifying assumptions.....	111
Comparing Two Arguments	112
Analyzing differences in interpretation and use of evidence.....	113
Synthesizing two arguments	115
Drawing new conclusions	115
Applying information to other situations	116
Chapter 7: Mastering Language Conventions and Usage	119
Correcting Errors in Agreement	119
Addressing subject-verb agreement.....	119
Practicing subject-verb agreement.....	122
Making pronouns agree with their antecedents	122
Choosing the right verb when you have multiple pronouns.....	123
Giving yourself a refresher in reflexive pronouns	124
Welcoming relative pronouns into the family	124
Considering collective and proper pronouns	125
Practicing your pronoun-antecedent agreement skills	125
Choosing the Right Words.....	126
Tuning your ear to homonyms.....	126
Correcting errors with frequently confused words	129
Eliminating informal language.....	131
Fixing Broken Sentences.....	134
Taking care of misplaced modifiers	134
Achieving parallelism, coordination, and subordination	135
Spotting and correcting faulty parallelism	136
Identifying and fixing faulty coordination.....	136
Pinpointing and correcting faulty subordination	137
Testing your skills: Parallelism, coordination, and subordination.....	137
Tightening wordy sentences	138
Using precise language.....	138
Opting for active over passive voice	138
Cutting out redundancy	139
Avoiding overuse of be verbs.....	139
Saying no to nominalizations.....	140

Watching out for prepositions	140
Purging phrasal verbs	140
Replacing negatives with positive statements	140
Practicing your word-slashing skills	141
Smoothing out awkward sentences	141
Using transitional words and phrases effectively	142
Eliminating sentence fragments and run-on or fused sentences	143
Detecting and fixing run-on or fused sentences	144
Finding a home for sentence fragments	145
Practicing your sentence repair skills	145
Tweaking the Text: Capitalization, Contractions, Possession, and Punctuation	146
Brushing up on capitalization rules	146
Telling the difference between contractions and possessives	147
Fine-tuning your punctuation skills	147
Practicing with capitalization, contractions, possessives, and punctuation	148
Chapter 8: Penning Powerful Prose for the Extended Response	151
Wrapping Your Brain around the Extended Response Guidelines	151
Choosing a Side	153
Identifying the different positions	153
Examining the strengths and weaknesses of each argument	155
Identifying premises and assumptions	155
Weighing the evidence	157
Testing for logical errors	159
Rooting out bias and emotional appeals	160
Picking a position you can support	160
Writing a Clear, Direct Thesis Statement	161
Structuring Your Argument	161
Putting your main points in logical order	163
Building your arguments	163
Considering Your Purpose, Audience, and Message	165
Purpose	165
Audience	165
Message	166
Writing and Revising Your Essay	166
Choosing your words carefully	166
Varying your sentence patterns	167
Smoothing transitions	167
Detecting and eliminating errors in spelling, grammar, usage, and punctuation	168
Rereading and revising your response	168
Part III: Putting Your RLA Knowledge and Skills to the Test	171
Chapter 9: Taking an RLA Practice Test	173
Answer Sheet for Reasoning Through Language Arts Practice Test	174
Reasoning Through Language Arts Test	175
The Extended Response	189
Chapter 10: Answers and Explanations for the RLA Practice Test	193
Answers and Explanations	193
Sample Extended Response	197
Answer Key	199

<i>Part IV: The Part of Tens</i>	201
Chapter 11: Ten Tips for Faster Reading and Improved Comprehension	203
Understanding Words from Context	203
Balancing Speed and Comprehension	204
Skimming on a Computer Screen.....	205
Remembering the Essay Models.....	206
Detecting Bias and Faulty Logic.....	206
Reading for Details (Picking Out Key Words).....	206
Tracking Tone in Longer Passages.....	207
Paraphrasing	207
Practicing Under Pressure	208
Maintaining Focus	209
Chapter 12: Avoiding Ten Tricky Writing Errors	211
Misusing Words	211
Overlooking Subject-Verb Disagreement	212
Mixing Verb Tenses.....	212
Using the First or Second Person in Analysis	213
Missing and Misplacing Commas	213
Being Inconsistent	214
Writing in Non-Standard English	214
Creating a Choppy Progression.....	214
Building Your Essay on Sloppy Thinking	215
Ignoring Proofreading Errors	215
<i>Index</i>	217

Introduction

You've decided to take the General Education Development (GED) test to earn the equivalent of a high school diploma. Congratulations! You're about to clear a major hurdle standing between you and your educational and professional goals. But now you realize that you need extra guidance in reading and writing to tackle the GED Reasoning Through Language Arts test. Perhaps you took the test once or even twice and didn't do so well. Perhaps you've done an honest self-assessment and now realize that English was never your favorite or best subject. Whatever the reason, you need to quickly review the essentials and practice answering questions like those you'll encounter on the test. You want to know what to expect so you're not blindsided on test day.

Welcome to *GED RLA Test For Dummies* — your key to excelling on the GED Reasoning Through Language Arts test. Here, you find everything you need to do well on the test, from guidance on how to improve reading speed and comprehension to how to analyze arguments. We also bring you up to speed on proper English conventions and usage and explain how to write a top-notch essay for the Extended Response portion of the test. Along the way, you find plenty of practice questions to reinforce your newly acquired knowledge and skills.

About This Book

As we were writing *GED Test For Dummies*, 3rd edition (Wiley), we didn't have the space to cover all four sections of the GED test in great detail. In that book, we provided a general overview of the GED test and two full-length practice tests that covered all four sections — Reasoning Through Language Arts (RLA), Mathematical Reasoning, Science, and Social Studies.

Knowing that each section of the GED test can be taken separately and that test-takers probably need more guidance in some subject areas than in others, we decided to develop a separate workbook for each section — four workbooks, each with a balance of instruction and practice. In this book, we focus exclusively on the GED Reasoning Through Language Arts test. Our goal is twofold: to prepare you to answer correctly any RLA question you're likely to encounter on the test so that you receive a high score and to help you do well on your Extended Response essay.

We begin by giving you a sneak peek at the test format and an overview of what's on the GED RLA test. We then provide a diagnostic test that presents you with RLA questions, which challenge your reading and reasoning knowledge and skills and identify your unique strengths and weaknesses. The diagnostic test and the self-assessment form following the test guide you to specific chapters for instruction and practice. When you feel ready, you can then tackle the full-length Reasoning Through Language Arts practice test in Chapter 9 and turn to Chapter 10 for answers and explanations. Check the answers even for questions you answered correctly because the answers do provide additional learning materials.

We wrap up with two Part of Tens chapters — one that presents ten tips to improve your reading speed and comprehension and another that helps you steer clear of ten common writing errors.

Foolish Assumptions

When we wrote this book, we made a few assumptions about you, dear reader. Here's who we think you are:

- ✔ You're serious about earning a high-school diploma or GED endorsement for existing qualifications as quickly as you can.
- ✔ You're looking for additional instruction and guidance specifically to improve your score on the GED Reasoning Through Language Arts test, not the Math, Science, or Social Studies test.
- ✔ You've made earning a high-school diploma and an endorsement a priority in your life because you want to advance in the workplace or move on to college.
- ✔ You're willing to give up some activities so you have the time to prepare, always keeping in mind your other responsibilities, too.
- ✔ You meet your state's requirements regarding age, residency, and the length of time since leaving school that make you eligible to take the GED test. (See Chapter 1 for details.)
- ✔ You have sufficient English language skills to handle the test.
- ✔ You want a fun and friendly guide that helps you achieve your goal.

If any of these descriptions sounds like you, welcome aboard. We've prepared an enjoyable tour of the GED test.

Icons Used in This Book

Icons – little pictures you see in the margins of this book — highlight bits of text that you want to pay special attention to. Here's what each one means:



Whenever we want to tell you a special trick or technique that can help you succeed on the GED RLA test, we mark it with this icon. Keep an eye out for this guy.



This icon points out information you want to burn into your brain. Think of the text with this icon as the sort of stuff you'd tear out and put on a bulletin board or your refrigerator.



Take this icon seriously! Although the world won't end if you don't heed the advice next to this icon, the warnings are important to your success in preparing to take the GED RLA test.



We use this icon to flag example questions that are much like what you can expect on the actual GED Reasoning Through Language Arts test. So if you just want to get familiar with the types of questions on the test, this icon is your guide.

Beyond the Book

In addition to the book content, you can find valuable free material online. We provide you with a Cheat Sheet that addresses things you need to know and consider when getting

ready for the GED Reasoning Through Language Arts test. You can access this material at www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/gedrlatest.

We also include additional articles at www.dummies.com/extras/gedrlatest that provide even more helpful tips and advice to help you score your best on the GED Reasoning Through Language Arts test.

Where to Go from Here

Some people like to read books from beginning to end. Others prefer to read only the specific information they need to know now. Here we provide a road map so you can find your way around.

Chapter 1 starts off with an overview of the GED test and how to register for the exam. Chapter 2 brings you up to speed on what the Reasoning Through Language Arts test covers. Chapter 3 is a must-read — a diagnostic test followed by a self-assessment to target areas where you need the most guidance and practice. Based on your self-assessment, you'll know which chapters to focus on in Part II of this book.

The chapters in Part II are the meat and potatoes — instruction and practice that covers reading comprehension, argument analysis, Standard English language conventions, and writing:

- ✔ **Reading comprehension:** The RLA test is essentially an open-book test in that it provides the content on which questions are based. That said, you have to be a very good and careful reader to identify the main ideas and pick out details from the reading passages on the test. In Chapter 5, we help you develop your reading comprehension skills.
- ✔ **Argument analysis:** The RLA test challenges your ability not only to read and understand the written word but also to evaluate arguments in terms of logic and supporting evidence. In Chapter 6, we explain how to pick apart arguments and separate fact from opinion.
- ✔ **English language conventions:** A significant portion of the GED RLA test presents you with writing errors in grammar, spelling, usage, punctuation, and other conventions and challenges you to choose the correction. In Chapter 7, we address the most common errors and explain how to correct them.
- ✔ **Extended Response:** Chapter 8 turns your attention to writing. Here, you find out what the Extended Response portion of the test is all about, how to compare two passages and determine which is most effective, and how to write an essay that clearly states your point of view and supports it with plenty of evidence in a well-reasoned persuasive essay.

When you're ready to dive into a full-length practice test that mimics the real GED Reasoning Through Language Arts test, check out Part III. After the test, you can check your answers with the detailed answer explanations we provide. (But be sure to wait until *after* you take the practice test to look at the answers!).

If you need a break, turn to the chapters in Part IV, where you can find ten tips to improve your reading speed and comprehension and descriptions of ten writing errors to avoid.

Part I

Getting Started with the GED RLA Test

getting started
with the

GED RLA
test



For Dummies can help you get started with lots of subjects. Visit www.dummies.com to learn more and do more with *For Dummies*.

In this part. . .

- ✔ Get oriented to the test format, question types, test scheduling, and scoring and find out what steps to take if English isn't your first language.
- ✔ Find out what's on the GED Reading Through Language Arts test and the knowledge and skills it requires you to demonstrate.
- ✔ Take a diagnostic test to identify your strengths and weaknesses and highlight the areas where you may need additional practice.
- ✔ Prepare for the actual test day and find out what you should or shouldn't do on the day(s) before and the day of the test, including during the exam.

Chapter 1

Taking a Quick Glance at the GED RLA Test

In This Chapter

- ▶ Warming up to the GED test format
 - ▶ Checking out what's on the GED RLA test
 - ▶ Registering for the test and choosing a test date
 - ▶ Completing the GED test when English is your second language
 - ▶ Understanding what your score means and how it's determined
-

The GED test offers high-school dropouts, people who leave school early, and people who were educated outside the United States an opportunity to earn the equivalent of a United States (U.S.) high-school diploma without the need for full-time attendance in either day or night school. The GED test is a recognized standard that makes securing a job or college placement easier.

The GED test complies with current Grade 12 standards in the U.S. and meets the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education. The GED test also covers the Common Core Standards, used in most states in the United States. These standards are based on the actual expectations stated by employers and postsecondary institutions.

The GED test measures whether you understand what high-school seniors across the country have studied before they graduate. Employers need better-educated employees. In addition, some colleges may be uncertain of the quality of foreign credentials. The GED provides those assurances. When you pass the GED test, you earn a high-school equivalency diploma. That can open many doors for you — perhaps doors that you don't even know exist at this point.

You're permitted to take the GED in sections, so you can take the Reasoning Through Language Arts (RLA), Math, Science, and Social Studies tests in separate testing sessions. This flexibility enables you to focus your studies and practice on one section of the test at a time, and this book supports your efforts to do just that.

Ready to get started? This chapter gives you the basics of the GED RLA test: how the test is administered, what the RLA test section looks like, how to schedule the test (including whether you're eligible), and how your score is calculated (so you know what you need to focus on to pass).

Knowing What to Expect: The GED Test Format

A computer administers the GED test. That means that all the questions appear on a computer screen, and you enter all your answers into a computer. You read, evaluate, analyze,

and write everything on the computer. Even when drafting an essay, you don't use paper. Instead, the test centers provide you with an erasable tablet. If you know how to use a computer and are comfortable with a keyboard and a mouse, you're ahead of the game. If not, practice your keyboarding. Also, practice reading from a computer screen, because reading from a screen is very different from reading printed materials. At the very least, you need to get more comfortable with computers, even if that means taking a short course at a local learning center. In the case of the GED test, the more familiar you are with computers, the more comfortable you'll feel taking the computerized test.



Under certain circumstances, as a special accommodation, the sections are available in booklet format. Check with the GED Testing Service to see what exceptions are acceptable.

The computer-based GED test allows for speedy detailed feedback on your performance. When you pass (yes, we said *when* and not *if*, because we believe in you), the GED Testing Service provides both a diploma and a detailed transcript of your scores, similar to what high-school graduates receive. They're now available online at www.gedtesting.com within a day of completing the test. You can then send your transcript and diploma to an employer or college. Doing so allows employers and colleges access to a detailed outline of your scores, achievement, and demonstrated skills and abilities. This outline is also a useful tool for you to review your progress. It highlights those areas where you did well and areas where you need further work. If you want to (or have to) retake the test, these results will provide a detailed guide to what you should work on to improve your scores. Requests for additional copies of transcripts are handled online and also are available within a day.

Reviewing the GED RLA Test

The Reasoning Through Language Arts (RLA) test is one long test that covers all the literacy components of the GED test. The 150-minute test is divided into three sections. First, you have 35 minutes on all content in question-and-answer format, then 45 minutes for the Extended Response (essay), followed by a 10-minute break, and then another 60 minutes for more general test items.



Time for the Extended Response can't be used to work on the other questions in the test, nor can you use leftover time from the other sections to work on the Extended Response.

Here's what you can expect on the RLA test:

- ✔ The literacy component asks you to correct text, respond to writings, and generally demonstrate a critical understanding of various passages. This task includes demonstrating a command of proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
- ✔ The Extended Response item, also known as "the essay," examines your skills in organizing your thoughts and writing clearly. Your response will be based on one or two source text selections, drawing key elements from that material to prepare your essay.

The essay is evaluated both on your interpretation of the source texts and the quality of your writing. You type on the computer, using a tool that resembles a word processor. It has neither a spell-checker nor a grammar-checker. How well you use spelling and grammar as you write is also part of your evaluation. You'll have an erasable tablet on which to prepare a draft before writing the final document.
- ✔ The scores from both components will be combined into one single score for the RLA test.

The question-answer part of this test consists mainly of various types of multiple-choice questions (also called items) and the occasional fill-in-the-blank question. Most items will be in the traditional multiple-choice format with four answer choices, but you'll also see drag-and-drop and drop-down menu items. For details on the different question types, see Chapters 2 and 3.

These items are based on source texts, which are materials presented to you for your response. Some of this source material is nonfiction from science and social studies content as well as from the workplace. About 25 percent is based on literature. Here's a breakdown of the materials:

- ✔ **Workplace materials:** These documents include work-related letters, memos, and instructions that you may see on the job.
- ✔ **U.S. founding documents and documents that present part of the Great American Conversation:** These bits may include extracts from the Bill of Rights, the Constitution, and other historical documents. They also may include opinion pieces on relevant issues in American history and civics.
- ✔ **Informational works:** These texts include documents that present information (often dry and boring information), such as the instructional manual that tells you how to set up an Internet connection on your tablet. They also include materials that you may find in history, social studies, or science books.
- ✔ **Literature:** These sources include extracts from novels, plays, and similar materials.

You find a variety of problems in the RLA test, including the following:

- ✔ **Correction:** In these items, you're asked to correct sentences presented to you.
- ✔ **Revision:** In these items, you're presented with a sentence that has a word or phrase underlined. If the sentence needs a correction, one of the answer choices will be better than the words or phrase underlined. If no correction is needed, either one of the answer choices will be the same as the underlined portion or one of the choices will be something like "no correction needed."
- ✔ **Construction shift:** In these types of problems, you have to correct a sentence by altering the sentence structure. The original sentence may not be completely wrong, but it can be improved with a little editing. In these cases, the question presents you with optional rewording or allows you to change the sentence order in a paragraph.
- ✔ **Text analysis:** These problems require you to read a passage and respond in some manner. It may be an analysis of the content, a critique of the style, review for biases or other influences, or responses to something in the content.

Because the computerized GED test is new and still evolving as we write this book, be sure to check out the latest and greatest about the GED test at www.gedtestingservice.com.



If you can't wait to get started practicing for the RLA test, you may skip to Chapter 3 to take a diagnostic version of the test or check out the chapters in Part 5 that cover the skills and knowledge required in greater detail.

It's a Date: Scheduling the Test

To take the GED test, you schedule it based on the available testing dates. Each state or local testing center sets its own schedule for the GED test, which means that your state decides how and when you can take each section of the test. It also determines how often

you can retake a failed section and how much such a retake will cost. Because a computer administers the test, many testing centers schedule an individual appointment. Your test starts when you start and ends when your allotted time is completed. The test centers are small computer labs, often containing no more than 15 seats, and actual testing facilities are located in many communities in your state.

You book your appointment through the GED Testing Service (www.gedtesting.com). Your local GED test administrator can give you all the information you need about scheduling the test. In addition, local school districts and community colleges can provide information about local test centers in your area.



Sending a specific question or request to the website may come with a charge for the service. To save money, you're better off asking a person at your local testing center. That way, you don't have to pay for the privilege of asking a question, and your answer will be based on rules and conditions specific to your area.

The following sections answer some questions you may have before you schedule your test date, including whether you're even eligible to take the test, when you can take the test, and how to sign up to take the test.

Determining whether you're eligible

Before you schedule your test, make sure you meet the requirements to take the GED test. You're eligible to apply to take the GED test only if

- ✔ **You're not currently enrolled in a high school.** If you're currently enrolled in a high school, you're expected to complete your diploma there. The purpose of the GED test is to give people who aren't in high school a chance to get an equivalent high-school diploma.
- ✔ **You're not a high-school graduate.** If you're a high-school graduate, you should have a diploma, which means you don't need to take the GED test. However, you can use the GED to upgrade or update your skills and to prove that you're ready for further education and training.
- ✔ **You meet state requirements regarding age, residency, and the length of time since leaving high school.** Check with your local GED test administrator to determine your state's requirements concerning these criteria. Residency requirements are an issue, because you may have to take the test in a different jurisdiction, depending on how long you've lived at your present address.

Recognizing when you can take the test

If you're eligible, you can take the GED test whenever you're prepared. You can apply to take the GED test as soon as you want. Just contact your local testing center or www.gedtesting.com for a test schedule. Pick a day that works for you.



You can take all four sections of the GED test together. That takes about seven hours. However, the test is designed so that you can take each section separately, whenever you're ready. In most areas, you can take the test sections one at a time, in the evening or on weekends, depending on the individual testing center. If you pass one test section, that section of the GED test is considered done, no matter how you do on the other sections. If you fail one

section, you can retake that section of the test. The scheduling and administration of the test vary from state to state, so check with the GED Testing Service site or your local high-school guidance office.

Because the test starts when you're ready and finishes when you've used up the allocated time, you should be able to take it alone and not depend on other people. For you, that means you may be able to find locations that offer the testing in evenings or on weekends as well as during regular business hours. Even better, because you don't have to take the test with a group, you may be able to set an individual starting time that suits you.

If circumstances dictate that you must take the paper version of the test, you'll probably have to forgo the flexibility afforded by the computer. Check well in advance to see what the rules are for you.



You can also apply to take the test if you're not prepared, but if you do that, you don't stand a very good chance of passing. If you do need to retake any section of the test, use your time before your next test date to get ready. You can retake the test three times in a year without waiting, but after the third failed attempt you must wait 60 days. In most jurisdictions, taking the test costs money (check with your local testing center to find out specifics for your area). The GED Testing Service does offer a discounted retake up to twice a year, but these promotions change. Some states include free retakes in the price of the test. Check with the GED Testing Service or your state when ready about what special discounts may be available. To save time and money, prepare well before you schedule the test. Refer to the later section "Knowing what to do if you score poorly on one or more tests" for details.

Are special accommodations available?

If you need to complete the test on paper or have a disability that makes it impossible for you to use the computer, your needs can be accommodated. However, other specifics apply: Your choice of times and testing locations may be much more restricted, but times to complete a test may be extended. Remember also that the GED testing centers will ask for documentation of the nature of the accommodation required.

The GED testing centers make every effort to ensure that all qualified people have access to the tests. If you have a disability, you may not be able to register for the tests and take them the same week, but, with some advanced planning, you can probably take the tests when you're ready. Here's what you need to do:

- ✔ Check with your local testing center or check out www.gedtestingservice.com/testers/accommodations-for-disability.
- ✔ Contact the GED Testing Service or your local GED test center and explain your disability.
- ✔ Request any forms that you have to fill out for your special circumstances.
- ✔ Ensure that you have a recent diagnosis by a physician or other qualified professional.

- ✔ Complete all the proper forms and submit them with medical or professional diagnosis.

- ✔ Start planning early so that you're able to take the tests when you're ready.

Note that, regardless of your disability, you still have to be able to handle the mental and emotional demands of the test.

The GED Testing Service in Washington, D.C., defines specific disabilities, such as the following, for which it may make special accommodations, provided the disability severely limits your ability to perform essential skills required to pass the GED test:

- ✔ Medical disabilities, such as cerebral palsy, epilepsy, or blindness
- ✔ Psychological disabilities, such as schizophrenia, major depression, attention deficit disorder, or Tourette's syndrome
- ✔ Specific learning disabilities, including perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia

Signing up

When you're actually ready to sign up for the test, follow these steps:

1. Contact your local GED test administrator to make sure you're eligible.

Refer to the earlier section "Determining whether you're eligible" for some help.

2. Ask the office for an application (if needed) or an appointment.

3. Complete the application (if needed).

4. Return the application to the proper office, with payment, if necessary.

The fees vary state by state, so contact your local administrator or testing site to find out what you have to pay to take the tests. In some states, low-income individuals may be eligible for financial assistance.

Note: You can also do all of this online, including submitting the payment, with your computer, tablet, or smartphone. Go to www.gedtestingservice.com to start the process.



Never send cash by mail to pay for the GED test. Most local administrators have payment rules and don't accept cash.

Working with unusual circumstances

If you feel that you may have a special circumstance that prevents you from taking the GED test on a given day, contact the GED test administrator in your area. If, for example, the test is going to be held on your Sabbath, the testing center may make special arrangements for you.



When applying for special circumstances, keep the following guidelines in mind:

- ✓ Document everything in your appeal for special consideration.
- ✓ Contact the GED test administrator in your area as early as you can.
- ✓ Be patient. Special arrangements can't be made overnight. The administrator often has to wait for a group with similar issues to gather so he can make arrangements for the entire group.
- ✓ Ask questions. Accommodations can be made if you ask. For example, special allowances include extended time for various disabilities, large print and Braille for visual impairments, and age (for individuals older than 60 who feel they may have a learning disability).

Taking the GED Test When English Isn't Your First Language

English doesn't have to be your first language for you to take the GED test. The GED test is offered in English, Spanish, and French. If you want to take the test in Spanish or French, contact your local GED test administrator to apply. Individuals who speak other languages as their first language, however, must take the test in English. If that is you, you should take a test of your English skills before taking the GED test.

Websites that can help you plan to take the GED test

The Internet is a helpful and sometimes scary place. Some websites are there to help you in your GED test preparation, while others just want to sell you something. You have to know how to separate the good from the bad. Here are a couple of essential ones (most are accessible through www.gedtestingservice.com):

- ✓ adulted.about.com/od/gettingyourged/a/statedged.htm is a website that links to the GED test eligibility requirements and testing locations in your state.
- ✓ usaeducation.info/Tests/GED/International-students.aspx is a site that explains GED test eligibility for foreign students.

If you're curious and want to see what's out there, type "GED test" into any search engine and relax while you try to read about 22 million results, ranging from the helpful to the helpless. We suggest leaving this last activity until after you've passed the tests. As useful as the Internet can be, it still provides the opportunity to waste vast amounts of time. And right now, you need to spend your time preparing for the test — and leave the rest for after you get your diploma.



If English, Spanish, or French isn't your first language, you must decide whether you can read and write English as well as or better than 40 percent of high-school graduates, because you may be required to pass an English as a Second Language (ESL) placement test. If you write and read English well, prepare for and take the test (either in English or in Spanish or French). If you don't read or write English well, take additional classes to improve your language skills until you think you're ready. An English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT) is also available for people who completed their education in other countries. For more information about the language component of the GED test, check out www.gedtestingservice.com/testers/special-test-editions.

In many ways, the GED test is like the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) comprehension test. If you've completed the TOEFL test with good grades, you're likely ready to take the GED test. If you haven't taken the TOEFL test, enroll in a GED test-preparation course to see whether you have difficulty understanding the subjects and skills assessed on the test. GED test courses provide you with some insight into your comprehension ability with a teacher to discuss your skills and struggles.

Taking Aim at Your Target Score

To pass, you need to score a minimum of 150 on each section of the test, and you must pass each section of the test to earn your GED diploma. If you achieve a passing score, congratulate yourself: You've scored better than at least 40 percent of today's high-school graduates, and you're now a graduate of the largest virtual school in the country. And if your marks are in the honors range (any score over 170), you're ready for college or career training.



Be aware that some colleges require scores higher than the minimum passing score. If you plan to apply to postsecondary schools or some other form of continuing education, check with their admissions office for the minimum admission score requirements.

The following sections address a few more points you may want to know about how the GED test is scored and what you can do if you score poorly on one or more of the test sections.