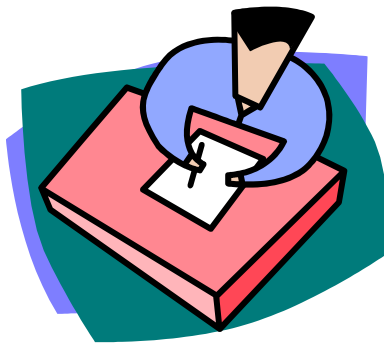




GED Test Language Arts: Writing

Most Missed Questions Study Guide



Organization

Sentence Structure

Usage

Mechanics

Study Guide created by Thelma Margulies and Carole Blair
through support from MA DOE, ACLS, Distance Learning.



Overview

This guide will provide targeted review for students preparing to retake the GED Language Arts, Writing Test or those who are close to test ready. Modules for preparation in each of the GED writing test areas are available online, along with information and resources for the “most missed questions”.

Assessment tools identified in the guide will facilitate students’ preparation needs. Individual learning plan forms outlining skills in each test area will provide a guide for efficient study plans. Skills will be listed in the table of contents to assist teachers and students in locating needed areas of study.

Using the Guide

Procedures and Strategies

1. Review students’ official GED scores
 2. Administer assessment tests
 3. Use Individual Learning Guides to established targeted practice plans in areas of greatest need
 4. Include practice in the *most missed questions and common errors* for Language Arts Writing test
 5. Consider how different topic areas might be weighted when creating the student’s learning plan
-

Language Arts, Writing Test—Most Missed Test Areas

Table of Contents

Overview	5
Common Errors and Most Missed Questions	7
Assessment Resources	13
Individual Learning Guide: GED Writing Part I	14
Individual Learning Guide: GED Writing Part II	15
Writing Skills – Organization (15% of Test)	16
Writing Skills – Sentence Structure (30% of Test)	18
Writing Skills – Usage (30% of Test)	25
Writing Skills – Mechanics (25% of Test)	29
Paragraph Writing Guide	36
Essay Writing Guide	43

Distance Learning GED Fast Track Language Arts, Writing Test

The Language Arts, Writing Test continues to have the second lowest scores on the GED. The Language Arts, Writing modules are designed to provide preparation resources in all areas of the writing test including information on most missed questions and common errors.

Overview

The Language Arts, Writing Test measures a students' ability to write a well constructed essay and revise and edit writing samples. A student must achieve a minimum score of 2 on the Essay Writing portion to receive any score. A score of 410 is the minimum for passing the entire test.

Language Arts, Writing Test Part 1

Students have 75 minutes to complete 50 multiple choice questions in the following content areas and question types:

Content Areas (Percent of Test)

- Organization (15%)
- Sentence Structure (30%)
- Usage (30%)
- Mechanics (25%)

Question Types (Percent of Test)

- Correction (45%)
- Revision (35%)
- Construction Shift (20%)

Correction

This question may involve one sentence, a number of sentences, a complete paragraph, or the text as a whole. This question type provides a series of choices and asks what correction should be made. Correction questions test skills in each of the following four content areas:

- Organization
- Sentence structure

- Usage
- Mechanics

Revision

The revision question presents 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

The construction shift type of question presents a sentence that must be rewritten by revising the sentence structure. This question tests a candidate's ability to manipulate sentence structures to create a better sentence. Organization construction shift questions may require the candidate 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

Language Arts, Writing Part 2

In the second part of the test, students must write an essay about an issue or subject of general interest. The essay topic will require students to present an opinion or explain views about the assigned topic. Testers will have 45 minutes in which to plan, write, and revise the essay.

Scoring

Two trained readers will score the essay on the basis of the following features:

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

Each reader will score the essay on a 4-point scale, and the scores will be averaged to find the final score. A final score of less than 2 on the essay will not get a score on the Language Arts, Writing Test. The student will need to retest in both parts 1 and 2.

GED Language Arts, Writing Test Common Errors and Most Missed Questions with Examples

Research and statistics demonstrate that key areas present special challenges for testers in Language Arts, Writing. Information and examples are provided in this module on the identified common errors and most missed questions.

Research and statistics are compiled from:

- GED Testing Center Report (GEDTS) ***Statistical Study: Language Arts Writing, Technical Assistance Paper #3 04/2006***
 - ***Performance Results from the GED Administrators' Conference 7/2005***, provided by the GED State Chief Examiner, Tom Mechem.
-

Language Arts, Writing Test Part 1

Construction Shift Questions

The construction shift questions present the most difficulty to test takers on the Language Arts, Writing Test part 1.

Construction Shift questions require student to:

- combine paragraphs
- separate paragraphs
- insert a new sentence within a paragraph
- select an alternate structure to create a more effective sentence

Construction Shift questions include the two content areas below:

- sentence structure
 - organization
-

Sentence Structure

- Subordination and Sentence Combining
- Students must analyze and combine parts of an existing text and create a new more effective sentence.

Example:

I propose that we hire a designer and a builder. They could develop the fenced area in the back of the building.

The most effective combination of these sentences would include which group of words?

- (1) Although I propose
- (2) While I propose
- (3) builder, which develop
- (4) builder to develop
- (5) build, they could

Answer: (4):

The combined sentence would read:

I propose we hire a designer and a builder to develop the fenced area in the back of the building.

Organization

Questions 1-2 require students to:

- Insert a new sentence within a paragraph (question 1)
- Separate paragraphs (question 2)

The questions refer to the following letter of application:

June 24, 2006
Jonathan Quinn , Employment Director
Capital City Gardening Services
4120 Wisconsin Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20016
Dear Mr. Quinn:

(A)
(1) I would like to apply for the landscape supervisor position advertised in the Sunday, June 23rd edition of the *Washington Post*. **(2)** My work experience and education combined with your need for an experienced landscape supervisor have resulted in a relationship that would profit both parties. **(3)** In May, I graduated from Prince William Community College. **(4)** Graduating with an associate of arts degree in horticulture. **(5)** My concentration within the program was designing gardens and choosing the appropriate plants for particular soils and regions. **(6)** I have also had considerable supervising experience. **(7)** For several years, I have worked with a local company, Burke Nursery and Garden Center, and have been responsible for supervising the four members of the planting staff.

(B)
(8) Our community knows that Capital City Gardening Services is a company that does excellent work and strives hard to meet the demands of its clients. **(9)** As my references will attest, I am a diligent worker and have the respect of both my coworkers and my customers. **(10)** I will be, as a landscape supervisor at your firm, able to put to use the skills and knowledge that I have obtained from my professional career and education. **(11)** I have included a copy of my resume, which details my principal interests education, and past work experience. **(12)** I have also included photographs of the landscape projects I have supervised as well as drawings of proposed projects.

(C)
(13) I am excited about the opportunities and many challenges that this position would provide. **(14)** Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.
Sincerely,
Patrick Jones
1219 Cedar Lane
Manassas, VA 24109

1. Which sentence below would be most effective at the beginning of paragraph B?

- (1) There are many companies in this community, a Capital City Gardening Services is one of them.
- (2) A company such as yours is known for a lot of things, especially the beautiful fountain, great billboard, and large parking area.
- (3) Like carpet-cleaning services, gardening services range in cost.
- (4) A company is only as good as its reputation.
- (5) Gosh, I don't know where to begin when saying good things about your company.

Answer: (4)

This question requires students to recognize that paragraph B needs a topic sentence. You must refer to the entire paragraph to select the most effective topic sentence. In organizational questions of this type, all five alternatives are grammatically correct, but because problems in tone or content, only one alternative is appropriate.

2. Which revision would improve the effectiveness of this letter?

Begin a new paragraph with

- (1) sentence 3
- (2) sentence 5
- (3) sentence 7
- (4) sentence 9
- (5) sentence 12

Answer: (1)

This organizational question requires you to study the entire document to determine where an effective paragraph break should occur. A paragraph starting with sentence 3 would clearly summarize and highlight the applicant's educational and professional qualifications.

Rearranging or Combining Paragraphs

(1) When I first brought my cat home from the Humane Society she was a mangy, sickly, and pitiful animal. Apparently she was declawed by her previous owners, then abandoned or lost. Since she couldn't hunt, she nearly starved.

(2) Not only that, but she had a terrible cold, too. She was sneezing and sniffing and her meow was just a hoarse squeak, and she'd lost half her tail somewhere. Instead of tapering gracefully, it had a bony knob at the end.

- (a) Combine paragraphs (1) and (2)
- (b) Remove the first sentence of paragraph (2), and then combine the paragraphs
- (c) Add the sentence "My dog, Frank, is ten years old." to the beginning of paragraph
- (d) Remove the first sentence in paragraph (1), and then combine the paragraphs
- (e) No correction is necessary

Answer: (1)

Paragraphs (1) and (2) can be combined because they share the same main idea.

Usage

Students have the most difficulty with verb form and subject verb agreement.

Verb Form

My work experience and education combined with your need for an experienced landscape supervisor has resulted in a relationship that would profit both parties.

- (a) Insert a comma after education
- (b) Change combined to combine
- (c) Change has resulted to would result
- (d) Replace profit with prophet
- (e) Replace parties with party's

Answer (3)

Change has resulted to would result

Subject Verb Agreement

Our community know Capital City Gardening Services is a company that does excellent work and strives hard to meet the demands of its clients.

Which correction should be made to the sentence?

- (a) Change know to knows
- (b) Change is to are
- (c) Change does to do
- (d) Change strives to strive
- (e) Replace its with it's

Answer (1)

Change know to knows

Community is one of the words that although representing many people is considered a singular noun and needs the singular form of the verb.

Mechanics

Students have the most difficulty with correct use of homonyms.

Example:

In addition, parents who send there children to Kids' Corner will see the new play areas as an improvement to the school.

- 1) Replace there with their
- 2) Replace there with they're
- 3) Change will see to to be seeing
- 4) Change will see to saw
- 5) Insert a comma after new

Answer: (1)

Replace there with their

Note: See the writing skills charts in this document for information on content areas for Language Arts, Writing Test Part 1.

Language Arts, Writing Part 2 Challenges in Essay Writing

Students passing the GED Language Arts, Writing Test continue to exhibit marginal writing. Problem areas generally noted in writing samples include:

- Inadequate editing and revision skills
- Inadequate development and examples/details
- Lack of an organized approach
- Poor use of word choice and grammar
- Change of focus
- Inability to clearly communicate ideas

Note: See Paragraph and Essay Writing Guides for information on building writing skills for the GED Language Arts, Writing Test Part 2.

Resources

GED Illinois – Guide to GED 2002

<http://www.gedillinois.org/staffinfo/teachresources/start.pdf>

GED Language Arts, Writing Skills Test Assessment Resources

Effective assessment is the key to designing a targeted study plan for students. Recommended assessment tools are listed below. These tools are available online or as part of commercial products and will aid in the process of identifying the most needed areas of preparation in the Language Arts, Writing test areas.

Online Assessment tools:

Literacy Link Online Practice Tests (requires free registration)

http://litlink.ket.org/ged_connection/writing.aspl

Literacy Link Pre-GED Connection and GED Connection Locator Tests

Available on the teacher's Home Space – Teacher Resources

http://litlink.ket.org/tips/locator_tests.aspl

Commercial GED products

GED Connection Fast Track Workbook

GED Pretests: Writing Part 1, pages 2 -8

Language Arts, Writing Pretest answer key, pages 44-46

Language Arts, Writing Answer Grid, page 1

<http://www.ket.org/enterprise/gedprep/>

New Reader's Press – Pass the GED Language Arts, Writing Test

Practice GED Language Arts, Writing Test, pages 27-37

Answer Key, *pages 41-43*

Answer Grid and Evaluation, *page 38*

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

Official GED Practice Tests Forms PA, PB, PC, PD, PE

Administrator's Materials

Steck-Vaughn, Publisher

<http://steckvaughn.harcourtachieve.com/>

Individual Learning Guide: GED Writing Part I

Student: _____ Date: _____

Group	Topic	Test ready	Needs Improvement	Recommendations for Study
Organization	Topic Sentence			
	Sentence/paragraph Combining			
	Unity/Coherence			
Sentence Structure	Fragment			
	Run-on			
	Comma Splice			
	Coordination & Subordination			
	Misplaced & Dangling Modifier			
	Parallelism			
Usage	Subject-Verb Agreement			
	Verb Tense			
	Pronoun Reference			
	Active Voice			
Mechanics	Capitalization			
	Commas			
	Semicolons			
	Apostrophes			
	Quotation Marks			
	Plurals			
	Misused & Misspelled Words*			

* Possessives, contractions, and homonyms

Individual Learning Guide: GED Writing Part II
GED Essay Assessment

Student: _____ Date: _____

Essay Categories	Comments and Recommendations for Improvement
<p>Response to the Prompt</p> <hr/> <p><i>GOAL: Presents a clearly focused main idea that addresses the prompt.</i></p>	
<p>Organization</p> <hr/> <p><i>Goal: Establishes a clear and logical organization.</i></p>	
<p>Development & Details</p> <hr/> <p><i>Goal: Achieves coherent development with specific and relevant details and examples.</i></p>	
<p>Conventions of EAE</p> <hr/> <p><i>Goal: Consistently controls sentence structure and the conventions of Edited American English.</i></p>	
<p>Word Choice</p> <hr/> <p><i>Goal: Exhibits varied and precise word choice.</i></p>	

Language Arts, Writing Test
Part 1

Organization	Examples
<p>Add Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The topic sentence states the main idea of paragraph (or whole essay). Some questions require students to add a topic sentence 	<p><u>Reading is my favorite activity.</u> I go to the library every month to choose a new book to read. I enjoy reading biographies the most. Biographies teach us how real people learn to overcome troubles they face in their lives. Reading is a wonderful way for me to relax, enjoy and learn.</p> <p><i>Topic Sentence: Reading is my favorite activity.</i></p>
<p>Divide Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When a paragraph contains two main ideas, it needs to be divided into two paragraphs. 	<p>Employees' attitudes at Jonstone Electric Company should be improved. The workers do not feel that they are a working team. If people felt they were a part of a team, they would not misuse the tools, or undermine the work of others. <u>Management's attitude toward its employees should also be improved.</u> Managers at Jonstone Electric act as though their employees are incapable of making decisions or doing their own work. Managers do not treat workers with respect.</p> <p><i>There are two main ideas in this paragraph; the worker's attitude and the management's attitude. The paragraph should be divided when the main idea switches to management's attitude.</i></p>
<p>Move Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Rearranging or Combining Sentences and Paragraphs</i> sometimes, a piece of writing will be more effective if sentences are moved around or combined with another paragraph. 	<p>(1) When I first brought my cat home from the Humane Society she was a mangy, sickly, and pitiful animal. Apparently she was declawed by her previous owners, then abandoned or lost. Since she couldn't hunt, she nearly starved.</p>

	<p>(2) Not only that, but she had a terrible cold, too. She was sneezing and sniffing and her meow was just a hoarse squeak, and she'd lost half her tail somewhere. Instead of tapering gracefully, it had a bony knob at the end.</p> <p><i>*Paragraphs (1) and (2) can be combined because they share the same main idea.</i></p>
<p>Remove Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes a paragraph contains a sentence that does not contribute to the main idea and should be deleted. • If a sentence has an inconsistent tone, it should be either deleted or rewritten to be consistent. 	<p>For me, the worst thing about waiting tables was the uniform. At the last place I worked, all the waitresses had to wear an ugly brown striped jumper. Underneath it we had to wear an even uglier polyester shirt. <u>Sometimes someone I knew would come in.</u> Now I have a job in an office, where I can wear my own clothes.</p> <p><i>* The sentence starting with <u>Sometimes someone I knew,....</u> does not contribute to the main idea and should be deleted.</i></p>

Online Guides and Practice

McGraw Hill

http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0809222280/student_view0/chapter4/ged_practice_quiz.html

American Council on Education

<http://www.acenet.edu/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Search&template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=7120>

Le Tourneau University – Online Writing and Learning-Owlet

<http://owlet.letu.edu/grammarlinks/sentence/sentence3.html>

Sample paragraphs adapted from the following resources:

<http://www.abeged.com>

<http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/teaching/rhet-terms/pop3a.cfm>

<http://faculty.washington.edu/ezent/impd.htm>

Sentence Structure

Sentence Fragment	Examples
<p>A sentence fragment may look like a sentence, but it does not express a complete thought. Common types of sentence fragments are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • missing a subject • missing a verb • a dependent clause 	<p>Because it's raining.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Possible Repair: I need my umbrella because it's raining.</p>
	<p>Three dedicated students.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Possible Repair: They are three dedicated students who study together frequently.</p>
	<p>When riding his motorcycle.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Possible Repair: He always wore a helmet when riding his motorcycle.</p>

Online Guides and Practice

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

http://www.english.uiuc.edu/CWS/wWORKSHOP/writer_resources/grammar_handbook/sentence_fragments.htm

Capital Community College Foundation, Hartford CT

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/cgi-shl/quiz.pl/fragments_add1.htm – practice

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/cgi-shl/quiz.pl/fragments_quiz.htm – practice

North Carolina Wesleyan College

http://annex.ncwc.edu/writing_lab/nc/handouts/setiii/prints/SETIII27P.html – practice

Sentence Structure

Run-On Sentence	Examples
<p>A run-on sentence is one where two independent clauses have been joined without punctuation. It can be repaired by using one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make two sentences • separate the independent clauses with a semi-colon • use a comma and a coordinating conjunction 	<p>They went to the movie theater to enjoy a quiet afternoon it was crowded and noisy.</p> <hr style="width: 30%; margin: 10px auto;"/> <p>Possible Repairs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They went to the movie theater to enjoy a quiet afternoon. It was crowded and noisy. • They went to the movie theater to enjoy a quiet afternoon; it was crowded and noisy. • They went to the movie theater to enjoy a quiet afternoon, but it was crowded and noisy.
	<p>He went shopping to buy a car with good gas mileage he didn't find one in his price range.</p> <hr style="width: 30%; margin: 10px auto;"/> <p>Possible Repairs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He went shopping to buy a car that would get good gas mileage. He didn't find one in his price range. • He went shopping to buy a car that would get good gas mileage; he didn't find one in his price range. • He went shopping to buy a car that would get good gas mileage, but he didn't find one in his price range.

Online Guides and Practice

Capital Community College Foundation, Hartford CT

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/runons.htm>

http://www.ccc.commnet.edu/sensen/part2/nine/run_ons_avoiding.html – practice

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/runons_quiz.htm – practice

Sentence Structure

Comma Splice	Examples
<p>A comma splice occurs when a comma joins two independent clauses. It can be repaired by using one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make two sentences • separate the independent clauses with a semi-colon • use a comma and a coordinating conjunction 	<p>She read the book in a single afternoon, it was better than she had expected.</p> <hr style="width: 30%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"/> <p>Possible Repairs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She read the book in a single afternoon. It was better than she had expected. • She read the book in a single afternoon; it was better than she had expected. • She read the book in a single afternoon, and it was better than she had expected.
	<p>Team members were disappointed that they didn't advance in the playoffs, their hopes for glory were dashed.</p> <hr style="width: 30%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"/> <p>Possible Repairs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team members were disappointed that they didn't advance in the playoffs. Their hopes for glory were dashed. • Team members were disappointed that they didn't advance in the playoffs; their hopes for glory were dashed. • Team members were disappointed that they didn't advance in the playoffs, and their hopes for glory were dashed.

Online Guides and Practice

University of Wisconsin-Madison

http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/CommonErrors_CommaSplice.html

Capital Community College Foundation, Hartford CT

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/nova/nova3.htm> – practice

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/nova/nova4.htm> – practice

Sentence Structure

Improper Coordination and Subordination	Examples										
<p>Coordination:</p> <p>A series of short, choppy sentences that are related can be made more interesting by combining them to vary their length and structure. The relationship between joined sentences can be shown by using conjunctions, such as:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">and or but so yet until not only...but also either...or</p>	<p>They left for vacation. They went to Niagra Falls. Their trip was pleasant. Their car broke down.</p> <hr style="width: 30%; margin: 10px auto;"/> <p>Possible Repair: They left to vacation at Niagra Falls, and the trip was uneventful until their car broke down.</p>										
	<p>My hero is my best friend. Bob. He is always there for me. We have been friends since we were in the sixth grade. He is a lot of fun to be around.</p> <hr style="width: 30%; margin: 10px auto;"/> <p>Possible Repair: Having been close friends with Bob since the sixth grade, I know that I can not only count on him, but also have good times with him.</p>										
<p>Subordination:</p> <p>Combines two ideas in a way that makes one idea more important than the other. The less important idea is dependent on-- or subordinate to--the more important idea.</p> <p>Common subordinate conjunctions:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">Whenever</td> <td>Since</td> </tr> <tr> <td>After</td> <td>Unless</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Until</td> <td>Although</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Before</td> <td>Even though</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Because</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Comma Rule: <i>Place a comma after but not before a dependent clause.</i></p>	Whenever	Since	After	Unless	Until	Although	Before	Even though	Because		<p>I have called repeatedly. The credit card company has not corrected my account.</p> <hr style="width: 30%; margin: 10px auto;"/> <p>Possible repair: <u>Although</u> I have called repeatedly, the credit card company has not corrected my account.</p>
	Whenever	Since									
After	Unless										
Until	Although										
Before	Even though										
Because											
	<p>You have to leave early. Why don't you arrive a few days early.</p> <hr style="width: 30%; margin: 10px auto;"/> <p>Possible Repair: Since you have to leave early, why don't you arrive a few days earlier too?</p>										

Online Guides and Practice

OWL, Purdue University

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_sentvar.html

Capital Community College Foundation, Hartford CT

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/conjunctions.htm#coordinating_conjunctions

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/combining_skills.htm

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/combining_quiz1.htm

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/combining_quiz2.htm

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/primer_quiz.htm

BBC Skillswise

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/words/grammar/interestsentences/compoundsentences/worksheet.shtml>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/words/grammar/interestsentences/compoundsentences/quiz.shtml>

Sentence Structure

Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers	Examples
<p>A misplaced modifier is a single word, phrase, or clause that does not point clearly to the word or words they modify. As a rule, related words usually should be kept together.</p>	<p>I had to move the desk cleaning the room.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Possible Repair: While cleaning the room, I had to move the desk.</p>
	<p>Delivering the mail, the dog chased the mailman.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Possible Repair: The dog chased the mailman who was delivering mail.</p>
<p>A dangling modifier is a phrase or clause which says something different from what is meant because modifiers are not placed next to their related words.</p>	<p>Toppled by a strong wind, the crew removed the broken tree limbs.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Possible Repair: The crew removed the broken tree limbs that had been toppled by a strong wind.</p>
	<p>Planted in the spring, the man took care of his vegetable garden.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Possible Repair: The man took care of the vegetable garden he had planted in the spring.</p>

Online Guides and Practice

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

http://www.english.uiuc.edu/CWS/wworkshop/writer_resources/grammar_handbook/misplaced_modifiers.htm

Towson University, Maryland

<http://wwwnew.towson.edu/ows/exercisemm.htm> – practice

<http://wwwnew.towson.edu/ows/exercisemm2.htm> – practice

Towson University, Maryland

<http://wwwnew.towson.edu/ows/moduleDangling.htm>

<http://wwwnew.towson.edu/ows/moduleDanglingEx5.htm> – practice

Sentence Structure

Parallelism	Examples
<p>Related sentence parts must be presented in parallel form.</p>	<p>She wanted to improve her health by sleeping more, eating healthier foods, and regular exercise.</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 10px auto;"/> <p>Possible Repair: She wanted to improve her health by sleeping more, eating healthier foods, and exercising regularly.</p>
	<p>After the alarm rang, he didn't know whether to find the cause, leave the building, or be shouting for help.</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 10px auto;"/> <p>Possible Repair: After the alarm rang, he didn't know whether to find the cause, leave the building, or shout for help.</p>

Online Guides and Practice

Belleview Community College, Washington
<http://www.bcc.ctc.edu/writinglab/Parallel.html>

University of Richmond, Virginia
<http://writing2.richmond.edu/writing/web/parstruc.html>

North Carolina Wesleyan College
http://annex.ncwc.edu/writing_lab/nc/handouts/setiii/prints/SETIII10P.html

Writing for Business and Pleasure
<http://www.wilbers.com/part36.htm> – practice

Capital Community College Foundation, Hartford CT
<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/parallelism.htm> – practice

Usage

Subject-Verb Agreement	Examples
Make the verb agree with the subject.	<p>Incorrect: The arrival of many robins signal spring.</p> <p>Correct: The <u>arrival</u> of many robins <u>signals</u> spring.</p>
Watch for sentences where the subject follows the verb.	<p>Incorrect: Into the sunset gallops the horses.</p> <p>Correct: Into the sunset <u>gallop</u> the <u>horses</u>.</p>
When singular subjects are joined by <i>either...or</i> <i>neither...nor</i> the verb is also singular.	<p>Incorrect: Either her mother or father usually attend her soccer games.</p> <p>Correct: <u>Either</u> her mother or father usually <u>attends</u> her soccer games.</p>
If one of the subjects is plural and one singular, make the verb agree with the subject nearest to it.	<p>Incorrect: The baseball captain and players cheers the coach.</p> <p>Correct: The captain and <u>players</u> <u>cheer</u> the coach. OR The players and <u>captain</u> <u>cheers</u> the coach.</p>

Online Guides and Practice

University of Wisconsin Waukesha, WI
<http://waukesha.uwc.edu/academics/owl/verbs.html>

The Writing Center- University of Wisconsin-Madison, WI
<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/SubjectVerb.html>

BBC Skillswise
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/words/grammar/sentencebasics/verbsubjectagreement/> – practice

Wesleyan College, NC
http://annex.ncwc.edu/writing_lab/ncwc/handouts.htm#subjects – practice

Usage

Verb Tense	Examples
<p>Writers use verb tenses to help readers understand how events are related to the present, past, or future. What follows describes simple verb forms. Use the links below to learn about more complex verb forms.</p>	
<p>Present tense expresses an unchanging, repeated, or reoccurring action or situation that exists only now.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The trees are evergreen. – unchanging • Every year the town has a parade on the 4th of July. – repeating or reoccurring action • The hail stones are as large as lemons. – exists only now
<p>Past tense expresses an action or situation that was started and finished in the past. Most past tense verbs end in -ed. Irregular verbs have special past tense forms which must be memorized. *</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President John F. Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963. – regular past tense verb • He built his home in the country. – irregular past tense verb
<p>Future tense expresses an action or situation that will occur in the future. This tense is formed by using will/shall with the simple form of the verb.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She will graduate in two years. • We shall see if the cat can be trained to use his litter box.

Online Guides and Practice

Middle Tennessee State University, TN
<http://mtsu32.mtsu.edu:11178/171/tenses.htm>

OWL (Online Writing Lab) Purdue University, IN
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/esl/esltensverb.html>

English Page
<http://www.englishpage.com/verbpage/verbtenseintro.html> – practice

Usage

Pronoun Reference	Examples
<p>A pronoun is a word used to stand for (or take the place of) a noun.</p> <p>A pronoun should refer clearly to one, clear, unmistakable noun coming before the pronoun. This noun is called the pronoun's antecedent.</p> <p>Common Pronouns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal (<i>I, we, you, thou, he, she, it, they</i>) • demonstrative (<i>this, these, that, those</i>) • relative (<i>who, which, that, as</i>), • indefinite (e.g., <i>each, all, everyone, either, one, both, any, such, somebody</i>) • interrogative (<i>who, which, what</i>) • possessive, sometimes termed possessive adjectives (<i>my, your, his, her, our, their</i>) • reflexive (e.g., <i>myself, herself</i>) 	<p>Unclear: Sally told Mary that she wanted the bills to go to her.</p> <p>Who is her? Does her refer to Sally or Mary?</p> <p>Clearer: Making it clear to Mary, <u>Sally</u> said <u>she</u> wanted the bills to go directly to <u>her</u>.</p> <hr/> <p>Unclear: The package was on the bus, but now it's gone.</p> <p>What is gone? The package or the bus?</p> <p>Clearer: The package was on the <u>bus</u> shortly before <u>it</u> left.</p> <hr/> <p>Noun and Pronoun Agreement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <u>horse</u> is loose. Please run after <u>him</u>. • <u>John</u> gave <u>himself</u> a pat on the back. • <u>Charles</u> and <u>William</u> put the money into <u>their</u> business account. • <u>What</u> did you say? • <u>Each</u> of the contestants <u>has</u> an equal chance to win.

Online Guides and Practice

OWL (Online Writing Lab) Purdue University, ID
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/g_pronuse.html

Utah Valley State College
<http://www.uvsc.edu/owl/tests/pronouns/pronouns.html> – practice

Towson University, MD
<http://wwwnew.towson.edu/ows/exercisep-aagr.htm> – practice
<http://wwwnew.towson.edu/ows/exercisep-aagr2.htm> – practice

D'Youville College, NY
http://depts.dyc.edu/learningcenter/owl/exercises/agreement_pa_ex1.htm – practice

Usage

Using the Active Voice	Examples
<p>The active voice of a verb simply means the form of the verb used when the subject is the doer of the action, whereas the passive voice the subject is acted upon.</p> <p>In most writing, use the active voice. It will make your writing clearer and less complicated.</p>	<p>Passive Voice: The plane was ready for take-off and left on time.</p> <p>Active Voice: The plane left on time.</p> <hr/> <p>Passive Voice: They were invited to the party by the guest of honor.</p> <p>Active Voice: The guest of honor invited them to the party.</p> <hr/> <p>Passive Voice: They were saddened by the news.</p> <p>Active Voice: The news made them sad.</p>

Online Guides and Practice

University of Wisconsin-Madison, WI

http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/CCS_activevoice.html

Winthrop University, SC

<http://www.winthrop.edu/wcenter/handoutsandlinks/passive.htm>

University of Dayton, OH

<http://academic.udayton.edu/writeplace/Student%20Resources/grammar%20card3.htm> – practice

Capital Community College Foundation, Hartford CT

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/passive_quiz.htm – practice

Mechanics

Capitalization: Always capitalize...	Examples
The first letter of the first word in a new sentence	<u>T</u> he game started on time.
Proper names and titles, days of the week, holidays,	<u>M</u> r. <u>S</u> mith will be here on <u>T</u> uesday, <u>C</u> hristmas <u>D</u> ay.
The pronoun "I"	The last time <u>I</u> visited my sister was several months ago.
First word of a direct quotation	" <u>D</u> on't believe everything you read in a book!"
East, West, South, and/or North if they are locations, but <i>never capitalize</i> them if they are directions	I used to live in the <u>E</u> ast. I live <u>e</u> ast of Los Angeles

Online Guides and Practice

Empire State College

<http://www.esc.edu/htmlpages/writerold/pandg/ex2cap.shtml> – practice

English Zone

<http://www.english-zone.com/spelling/caps01.html> – practice

Grammar Book

<http://www.grammarbook.com/punctuation/capital.asp>

Mechanics

Commas: Use a comma...	Examples
After an introductory phrase in a sentence	After the wedding ceremony, there was a reception for friends and family.
At the beginning and end of a phrase that interrupts the main thought	The student's paper, an essay on recycling, was very well written.
To separate items in a series	Jane bought apples, peaches, pears and cherries on Saturday.
Before a connecting word to link two complete sentences together	I could ask my boss for the day off, or I could assert my right to take a personal day.
To introduce a quotation in a sentence.	The teacher said, "Don't forget your homework tomorrow."

Online Guides and Practice

Grammar Bytes

<http://chompchomp.com/exercises.htm#Commas> – practice

English Language Center - Study Zone – University of Victoria, Canada

<http://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/elc/studyzone/330/grammar/comma.htm> – practice

University of Victoria, Canada

<http://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/elc/studyzone/330/grammar/comma1.htm> – practice

Mechanics

Semicolons: Use a semicolon to...	Examples
Link two related <u>independent clauses</u>	The play was excellent; all the actors did a great job.
Link clauses connected by <u>conjunctive adverbs</u> Conjunctive adverbs... <i>also, however, otherwise, consequently, therefore</i>	I liked the all the exhibits; however, I wish I had more time at the fair.
To separate items in a series if the elements of the series already include commas	I invited Jim, from N.Y; Jane, from Maine; and Rose, from Vermont, to our wedding reception.

Online Guides and Practice

The Writing Center- University of Wisconsin-Madison
<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/Semicolons.html>

The Writer's Complex – “*Punctuation Points*” practice
http://www.esc.edu/esonline/across_esc/writerscomplex.nsf/home

Dalton State College - practice
http://www.daltonstate.edu/faculty/mnielsen/semicolon_2_practice.htm – practice

Mechanics

Apostrophe: Use an apostrophe to...	Examples
Form possessives of nouns	Fran's dog children's toys the Joneses' new home Or the Jones' new home
Show the omission of letters in contractions	she is = she's have not = haven't it is = it's
To show the plurals of letters	cross your t's and dot your i's

Online Guides and Practice

Purdue University

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/g_apost.html

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/interact/g_apostEX1.html – practice

Empire State University

<http://www.esc.edu/htmlpages/writerold/pandq/ex1apo.shtml> – practice

Mechanics

Quotation Marks: Use Quotation Marks...	Example
At the beginning and end of the exact words of speaker or writer	The teacher said, "The books will be distributed on Tuesday."
To indicate titles of shorter works	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a poem• a song title• a short story or a chapter title of a longer work• a title of a newspaper or magazine article• titles of television or radio programs

**Periods and commas always go inside quotation marks. Question marks go inside quotation marks if the quotation is a question.*

Online Guides and Practice

Grammar Slammer

<http://www.englishplus.com/grammar/00000102.htm>

The Tongue Untied – University of Oregon

<http://grammar.uoregon.edu/punctuation/quotations.html>

Guide to Grammar and Writing

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/quotes_quiz.htm – practice

Mechanics

Plurals: To make a noun plural...	Examples
Add an "s"	one dog two dogs
Add "es" to nouns ending in -ch, -sh, -s, -x, -z, -ss	two boxes three wishes four churches
Change "y" to "ies" with nouns ending in a consonant and "y"	family - families candy - candies
If there is a vowel before the "y" then add "s"	toy - toys
Change a "f" or "fe" to "ves" Exceptions: roof, hoof, chief, believe, cliff	knife - knives shelf – shelves

Online Guides and Practice

The English Zone

<http://english-zone.com/teach/pdf-files/spelling-nouns.pdf> – practice

Practice

<http://www.english-zone.com/spelling/nouns1.html> – practice

Guide to Grammar and Writing

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/plurals.htm> – practice

English Language Center Study Zone University of Victoria

<http://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/elc/studyzone/330/grammar/plural1.htm> – practice

Mechanics

Commonly Misused/Misspelled Words	Examples
there - (location) their - (possession) they're - (there are, contraction)	<i><u>There</u></i> is my neighbor. <i><u>Their</u></i> dog is lost. <i><u>They're</u></i> two pieces left.
to - (direction) too - (more/also) two - (number)	Go <u>to</u> the store. It's <u>too</u> hot in the house. The <u>two</u> girls are late.
accept - to agree with, to receive except - to exclude	I <u>accept</u> the job as secretary for the club. I can work every day <u>except</u> Saturday.
then - (sequence) than - (comparison)	He watched TV, and <u>then</u> he made dinner. Today is warmer <u>than</u> yesterday.
it's - (It is = contraction) its - (possessive pronoun)	<i><u>It's</u></i> time for a day off! Put the book in <u>its</u> right place.

Online Guides and Practice

Empire State University - practice

<http://www.esc.edu/htmlpages/writerold/pandq/ex6mis.shtml> – practice

Amherst College – Writing Guide

<http://www.amherst.edu/~writing/writingbetter/pitfalls.html#fmw>

Guide to Grammar and Writing

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/cgi-shl/quiz.pl/its_there_quiz.htm – practice



Paragraph Writing Guide



Table of Contents

Paragraph Basics	38
A Sample Paragraph	39
Paragraph Editing Checklist	40
My Paragraph Guide	41
Writing a Paragraph Activity	42



Writing a good Paragraph

Paragraphs form the basis for writing the GED essay. Use the chart below to learn how to construct a good paragraph.

Paragraph Basics

Paragraph: A group of sentences that tells about a single topic or thought
A paragraph has a structure. It is usually 4-6 sentences and includes the following:

Main Idea	A paragraph begins with a main idea sentence that tells the reader what the paragraph is about.
Body Details	Body sentences give more information about the main idea. Body sentences can include: Facts Details Explanations Reasons Examples
Ending Sentence	A closing sentence ends the paragraph. A closing sentence is: a summary sentence that restates your main idea and supporting details OR a sentence that draws a conclusion or makes a prediction based on your main idea and supporting details



A Sample Paragraph

Topic: Write about a favorite activity

Main Idea	Reading is my favorite activity.
Body Details	I go to the library every month to choose a new book to read. I enjoy reading biographies the most. Biographies teach us how real people learn to overcome troubles they face in their lives. One person I have enjoyed reading about is Helen Keller, a person who was blind and deaf since childhood, who became a famous teacher.
Ending Sentence (Conclusion)	Reading is a wonderful way for me to relax, enjoy my free time and learn.

When put together, the paragraph pieces look like this:

Reading is my favorite activity. I go to the library every month to choose a new book to read. I enjoy reading biographies the most. Biographies teach us how real people learn to overcome troubles they face in their lives. One person I have enjoyed reading about is Helen Keller, a person who was blind and deaf since childhood who grew up to be a famous teacher. Reading is a wonderful way for me to relax, enjoy and learn.



Paragraph Writing -- Basic Checklist

1.	The paragraph begins with a topic sentence that tells what the paragraph is about.	
2.	Body sentences give more information about the topic	
3.	The last sentence is a summary sentence	
4.	Each sentence has a subject and a verb.	
5.	Each sentence begins with a capital letter.	
6.	Each sentence ends with punctuation.	
7.	If the paragraph has any proper nouns, each proper noun begins with a capital letter.	
8.	Words are spelled correctly.	

My Paragraph Guide

Name:		Date:	
Paragraph Notes			
Main Idea Topic:			
Body Detail 1		Body Detail 2	Body Detail 3
Ending Sentence:			
Paragraph Draft			
Main Idea			
Body Details			
Ending Sentence			



Paragraph Writing Activity

- Print a copy of the [My Paragraph Guide](#) handout. Use the guide to plan your paragraph
 - Select a topic from the list below and write your paragraph draft
 - Refer to the *Paragraph Basics* section so you are sure to include the main idea, body and summary sentences.
 - Use the *Paragraph Checklist* to edit and revise your work
 - Start the Essay Writing section after you have written a few good paragraphs
-

Use one of the following topics, or one of your own, for this activity.

A person who has made a difference in my life is ...

My favorite book is ...

My favorite movie is ...

My favorite season of the year is ...

A day I will never forget is ...

Something that makes me angry is ...

Something that makes me happy is ...



GED Essay Writing Guide



Table of Contents

Essay Basics	45
My Essay Guide	46
Editing and Revising Checklists	47
Writing an Essay Activity	49
Essay Scoring Rubric	50
Sample Essay Topics	51
Essay Planning Activity	52



Essay Basics

Use the chart below to learn about the structure of a Five Paragraph Essay. Read information about writing each of the three main parts of the essay: the Introduction, the Body and the Conclusion. .

Introduction	<p>The Introduction should have the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Topic Sentence: One sentence that includes the topic of the essay and your opinion/point of view about the topic• Supporting Sentences (3): Two or three main ideas supporting your opinion on the topic (one sentence for each supporting idea). You will need to discuss each supporting idea in the body of your essay.• Summary Sentence (optional): You may include a closing sentence summarizing your opinion/point of view.
Body	<p>The Body of the Essay should contain 3 paragraphs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the 3 supporting sentences in your introduction to write the body.• Start each body paragraph with one supporting idea from your introduction.• Use details and examples to complete each paragraph (4-6 sentences)
Conclusion	<p>The Conclusion</p> <p>The last paragraph of your essay is the conclusion. The conclusion echoes the introduction and summarizes the main points from your essay. Use the suggestions below to complete your conclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summarize the main points from your essay• Give advice, make predictions, or draw a conclusion• Check your introduction to make sure you emphasize the main points

My Essay Guide

Name:	5-PARAGRAPH ESSAY	Date:
-------	--------------------------	-------

Main topic of Essay:		
Sub Topic 1: Notes	Sub Topic 2: Notes:	Sub Topic 3: Notes:
Introduction:		
Body Paragraph 1 (Sub Topic 1)		
Body Paragraph 2 (Sub Topic 2)		
Body Paragraph 3 (Sub Topic 3)		
Conclusion:		



Editing Checklist

Read over your essay carefully, and check for each writing skill listed below. Make corrections and check off each area on the chart when it is completed.

Skill Area	Done
<i>Mechanics</i>	
Check for correct capitalization.	
Check for correct punctuation.	
Check for correct spelling.	
<i>Usage</i>	
Check for subject verb agreement.	
Check for correct verb tense.	
<i>Sentence Structure</i>	
Check for sentence fragments, run-on sentences, comma splices	
Check for correct coordination and subordination	
Check for misplaced or dangling modifiers	
Check for correct parallelism	



Revising Checklist

Read over your essay carefully, and check for each area listed below. Make any changes needed to your essay. Check off each area on the chart when it is completed.

Skill List	Done
Organization	
Is there an organized plan for development?	
Do the paragraphs have a strong structure?	
Is the five paragraph essay format used?	
Content	
Does the essay respond to the assigned prompt?	
Is the main idea clear?	
Do the ideas in each body paragraph support the main idea?	
Are there sufficient examples and details?	
Does the essay demonstrate the best word choices?	
Does the conclusion summarize the main points?	

Writing a Practice GED Essay

Practice GED Writing Test

Part 2 – The Essay

Essay Topic

Topic D

How do you define success?

In your essay, describe what it means to be successful. Give specific details to explain your views. Use your personal observations, experience, and knowledge.

Part II is a test to determine how well you can use written language to explain your ideas. In preparing your essay, you should take the following steps:

- Read the **DIRECTIONS** and the **TOPIC** carefully
- Plan your essay before you write. Use scratch paper provided to make any notes. These notes will be collected but not scored
- Before you turn in your essay, reread what you have written and make any changes that will improve your essay
- Your essay should be long enough to develop the topic adequately.

Source: Official GED Practice Test: Language Arts, Writing; American Council on Education

GED Essay Scoring Rubric

This tool is designed to help readers score an essay. Two readers read the GED essay, each giving a score between 1 and 4. The average of the two is the final score for the essay portion of the test. The score must be at least 2 to pass the test.

	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



Sample Essay Topics

1. What has been the best period in your life, and why?

Write an essay describing the time of your life when you were the happiest.

2. Most people feel that they have "learned some lessons" in their life. They may have made some mistakes that taught them something.

What is one thing you have learned from your past? What would you do differently if you could? Remember to be specific.

3. Choose an important person that you have looked up to and who has helped you in your life.

In an essay explain who this person is; why you look up to her (him) and how the person has helped you. Be specific and give examples.

4. Do you believe in the saying "Nice guys finish last"?

Write an essay presenting your view. Support it with examples from your own experience, your observations, and your personal knowledge.

5. Some people believe that "every cloud has a silver lining". Do you agree or disagree that there is something to be gained from even the most negative experience?

In an essay, explain whether you agree or disagree. Support your view.

6. How are your responsibilities different today than they were when you were younger?

Write an essay comparing your responsibilities now and in the past. Give examples and be specific.

Essay Planning Activity

1. Use the suggested essay prompts in the essay guide and this form to practice planning essay prompt responses. Being able to quickly sketch out your essay plan will help you complete the essay portion of the GED test within the allotted time.
 2. Use your planning notes to write a complete 5-paragraph essay
-

The essay prompt asks me to write about:

My topic sentence is:

My three main supporting subtopics are:

- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
-

The essay prompt asks me to write about:

My topic sentence is:

My three main supporting subtopics are:

- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
-

The essay prompt asks me to write about:

My topic sentence is:

My three main supporting subtopics are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.