



The GED Social Studies Test

Passing the GED Social Studies Test



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GED

Video Partner

#16 Passing the GED Social Studies Test

The secret of success is constancy of purpose.

Benjamin Disraeli

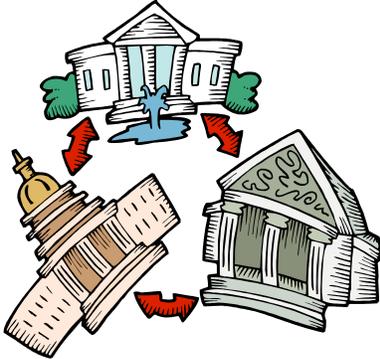
TEST OVERVIEW:

- Time: 70 minutes
- 50 multiple-choice questions
- Material is presented in 3 forms:
 - Prose only
 - Graphic or visual only
 - Prose and graphic combinations.
- 60% of questions require the reading of graphic text: cartoons, photos, timelines, maps, graphs, or charts.
- Written text passages include:
 - *Practical documents*: advertisements, voter guides, insurance forms, tax forms
 - *Key historical documents*: The Constitution, The Declaration of Independence, landmark Supreme Court decisions.
- 4 major content areas are tested:
 - History (40%: U.S. specific — 12 questions; Global — 8 questions)
Major periods and developments of American History:
 - Colonization through westward expansion
 - Civil War
 - Industrialization
 - Armed conflict and global economic depression
 - Postwar and contemporary United States
 - Enduring issues and current challenges



Major periods and developments of World History:

- Early civilizations and the great empires
- World religions
- Feudalism through the era of expansion
- Global age
- Revolutions
- Armed conflicts
- 20th Century



- Civics (25% - 13 questions)

Democracy, citizenship and foreign relations:

- Politics and government
- The American political system
- Constitutional democracy
- Relationship of United States to other nations
- Roles of citizens

- Economics (20% - 10 questions)

Economic theory and consumerism:

- Economic reasoning and choice
- Comparison of modern economic systems
- Production and consumers
- Financial institutions
- Government's role in the economy
- Labor
- Global markets



- Geography (15% - 7 questions)

The world in spatial terms:

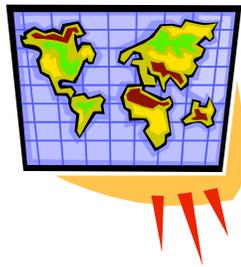
- Places and regions
- Physical systems
- Human systems
- Environment and society
- Uses of geography

Video 16 Focus: how to prepare for the different kinds of questions asked on the Social Studies section of the GED

You Will Learn From Video 16:

- That you will need to know certain basic facts in each of the test areas.
- That questions check your comprehension and critical thinking skills.
- That maps may be used in history, government, and economics questions, as well as in geography.
- That different types of charts, graphs, and graphics have different purposes.

That dealing with life experiences prepares you to succeed on the Social Studies GED test.



Words You Need to Know:

While viewing the video, put the letter of the meaning by the correct vocabulary word. (Answers are on page 13.)

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| _____ 1. summarize | a. pictorial form of commentary on a current or historic event or situation, often using humor or irony |
| _____ 2. analyze | b. use facts provided to discover relationships or predict outcomes |
| _____ 3. political cartoon | c. graphic showing the order in which events occurred |
| _____ 4. time line | d. the application of life experiences to solve new problems |
| _____ 5. common sense | e. restate the theme of a paragraph in a single sentence |

Points to Remember:



- The social studies questions require accurate reading of both text and graphics.
- Take the time to read all legends on maps and all labels on graphs.
- Relate new information to events you have experienced or read about.
- Exercise your comprehension skills by reading the front page of a daily newspaper.
- Use your wrong answers on practice tests to gain new information and to discover how questions are structured.



Did You Catch That?

Test your memory (or previous knowledge) of the following points made in *Program #16 – Passing the GED Social Studied Test*. After your first viewing of the video, mark each statement below True or False. If False, write the correct information on the line below the statement. (Watch the video again to check your answers, or look on page 13.)

- T F** 1. The lady who told of taking the GED after losing her husband and needing to support her three sons eventually became the first woman Lieutenant Governor of Delaware.

- T F** 2. When answering GED questions, it is best to save time by stopping at the first answer choice that sounds correct.

- T F** 3. The intended use of a map—why it was made—governs the information it provides.

- T F** 4. The map’s legend is a description (story) of how it was developed.

- T F** 5. A circle or pie chart shows changes over time.

- T F** 6. NAFTA is a trade agreement between the United States, Africa, and Asia.

- T F** 7. Many GED test questions can be answered correctly by applying common sense to the information given.

- T F** 8. Although the designation, *BCE – Before the Common Era* is considered more universally acceptable than *BC – Before Christ*, both labeling systems count from the same zero year.

- T F** 9. On the GED, you are not penalized for wrong answers, so it is best to attempt to answer every question, even if it means guessing.

- T F** 10. You only have one chance to take each section of the GED, so you need to be sure you’ll pass it the first time.



Know the Basics

Each area of study in the Social Studies test is built on basic information and concepts. Although you will be able to answer some questions just by reading carefully and applying common sense, you will gain speed and confidence by making sure you are equipped with the following information:

- History – a sense of major periods and the chronology of events
- Civics – the major provisions of the constitution, the structure of the federal system, the law-making process, and the role of voters in a democracy
- Economics – the concepts of supply and demand, competition, scarcity, and common economic statistics
- Geography – the elements and varied uses of maps, the locations and names of the continents, major bodies of water, the states and regions of the United States, and the continent on which countries are located.

Make Use of GED Textbooks



For a fairly thorough check of your present familiarity with the basics, take the pretest or skill survey found at the beginning of most GED preparation workbooks. For example, *Contemporary's GED Social Studies* (2002) offers a pretest on page 1.

The Pretest Evaluation Chart on page 24 can help you determine which areas you have under control and which areas need study. After you complete the pretest and check your answers, circle the numbers of the questions you missed. The areas with the most circles indicate which subject areas you need to study (horizontal rows) and which question types are most difficult for you—comprehension, application, analysis, or evaluation (vertical columns).

Beyond Books

You may already know more of these basics than you realize because they have formed the backbone of elementary and high school social studies courses, but also because you may have absorbed much of this information while making sense of your environment. Many everyday activities make use of skills and provide information that will be helpful to you when you face GED questions.

Have you:

- Used a map to find a business or office you needed to visit?
- Read the directions to file a tax return?
- Followed a high-profile court case on television?
- Studied a voter’s pamphlet?
- Watched a movie based on a historic event?



Try this informal survey of your current information-gathering habits:

How often do you...	Rarely/Never	Sometimes	Frequently
1. Read the front page of a daily newspaper?			
2. Watch television or listen to radio news?			
3. Watch or listen to a city council or county board of supervisors meeting?			
4. Discuss political events with others?			
5. Watch history documentaries or movies about historical events?			
6. Use the Internet to read the news, locate an address on a map, or research a business or a government program?			
7. Read a historical novel or biography?			
8. (Other habits you find helpful):			

If you already score in the “Frequently” column on several points, congratulations! If you think you need some improvement, in the spaces below, list the numbers of up to three of the above habits you think would help you learn most quickly. To the right, write your plan to increase these activities in your daily life.

Habit #	I will add to my Social Studies knowledge base by:

Political Cartoons – Breaking the Code

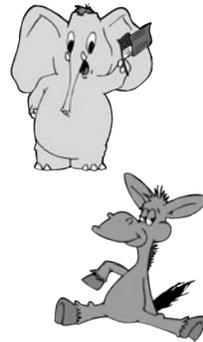
Political cartoonists share their opinions about actual events or situations through their drawings. Unlike most cartoons found in newspapers' comics sections, these cartoons are not designed just to "tickle the funny bone" or to entertain by telling a story with universal, or at least culturally universal, human appeal. Political cartoonists use their art to ask the reader to see a problem or situation in a new light, making the same connections the cartoonist has made. The reader need not agree with the cartoonist's viewpoint to enjoy the political cartoon but does need to understand what the cartoonist is saying in order to decide if it is true.

To "get" a political cartoon, the reader must recognize the symbols the cartoonist is using to refer to real-life subject matter and then study the way these elements are treated. For instance, the donkey usually signifies the Democratic Party and the elephant is a Republican. Putting the head of an elephant on the body of a donkey might indicate that a known Democrat is thinking like a Republican. The words in a political cartoon are keys to their



meaning. If the cartoonist wants a symbol to stand for a particular person, group, or event, it may be labeled.

Speech bubbles and captions may be present as well as text that appears to be just part of the scene. In a political cartoon, every word has been added for a reason, so read the street signs, product labels, T-shirt messages—all the text.



Political cartoonists do their homework. Mike Keefe, before drawing the cartoon on the next page, could have uncovered the following information about cell-phone use while driving:

The use of cellular telephones in motor vehicles is associated with a quadrupling of the risk of a collision during the brief period of a call. Decisions about regulation of such telephones, however, need to take into account the benefits of the technology and the role of individual responsibility.

Source: Abstract (short summary) of Association Between Cellular Telephone Calls and Motor Vehicle Collisions, *The New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 336, 1997, Donald A. Redelmeier, MD, and Robert J. Tibshirani, PH.D.

The effects of using a cell phone while driving:

- You are twice as likely to miss a traffic signal.
- Your reaction time is slower to the signals you do detect.
- Your risk of causing a crash **increases by 400%**!
- This amount of risk is the same as if you were driving legally intoxicated!
- The Harvard University's Center for Risk Analysis estimates that cell phones are the cause of 2600 deaths and 570,000 injuries each year.

- Mobile phones are also to blame for 1.5 million crashes per year resulting in property damage.
- Using hands-free equipment does not improve driver performance. It is the phone conversation that distracts!

Source: http://www.drivenowchatlater.com/Dont_Drive_And_Talk.html



Source: Mike Keefe, the Denver Post. Reprinted with permission.

What two conflicting points about cell phones and accidents does Keefe illustrate in his cartoon? (Answers are on page 13.)

1. _____
2. _____



Can you envision a political cartoon that points out the *advantages* of using a cell phone while driving?

Discuss with classmates or friends whether a “pro-cell phone” cartoon would be successful. Would it be needed? Why or why not?

What do your answers suggest about the role political cartoonists play in society?



Test Tip: On the GED Social Studies test, political cartoons may appear with questions about history, economics, government, and even geography. Often, one cartoon prompts questions about more than one of the subject areas. For instance, a cartoon about NAFTA could touch on all of these topics.



The GED asks four main types of questions: comprehension, application, analysis, and evaluation. Because over half the GED Social Studies questions refer to some form of graphic—cartoon, photo, timeline, map, graph, or chart—you can improve your test-taking skills by applying critical thinking skills to graphs and charts.

Working Definitions:

Graph – visual comparison of numbers or amounts

Chart – information listed in orderly columns with brief headings or captions

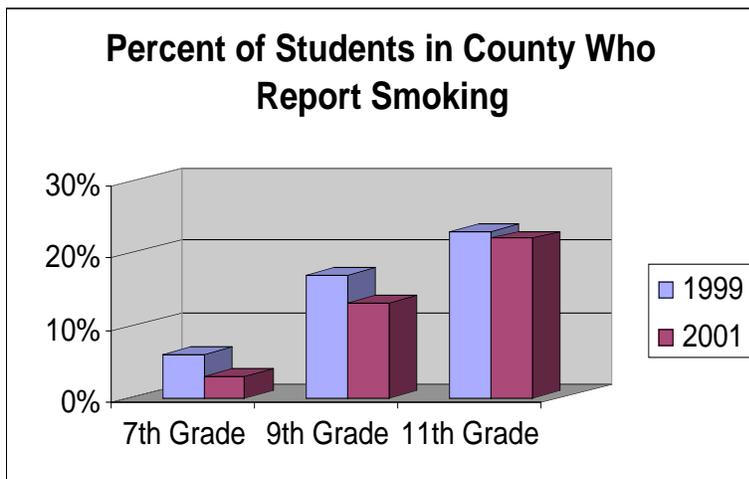
Comprehension – demonstrating understanding by summarizing or restating

Application – demonstrating understanding or knowledge by using it in a new situation

Analysis – recognizing the elements and organization of material being presented

Evaluation – judging the logic, the influence of value systems, and the adequacy of facts used in developing a set of information

Answer the following questions about graphs and charts. (Answers are on page 13.)



“Among local students there was a decrease in smoking among all age groups surveyed. Trends showed that the likelihood of a student smoking increased as students grew older, and out of the 1,619 11th graders surveyed, 22 percent reported smoking cigarettes on a daily basis.”

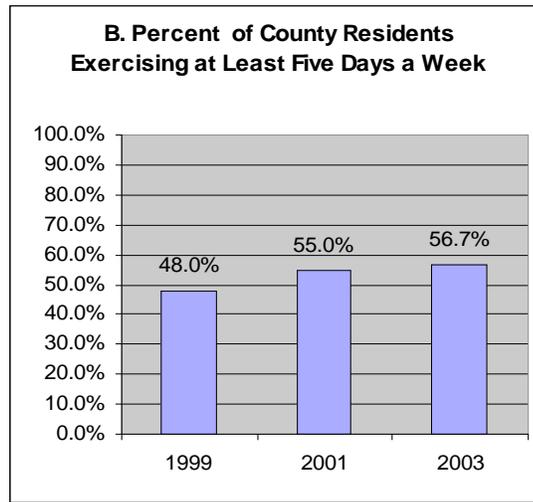
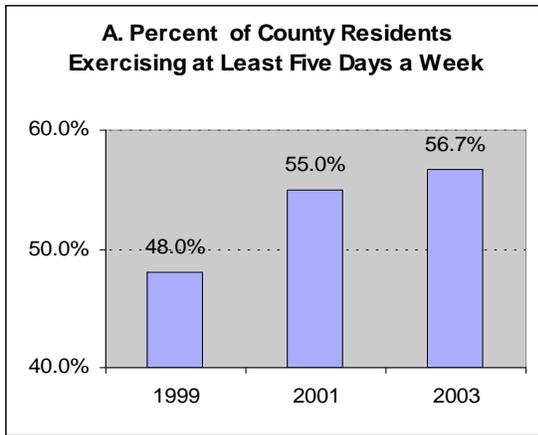
Source: ACTION for Healthy Communities 2003 Report Card

1. A. This graphic is a: graph chart
- B. Which statement would be the best summary of the graphic and text?
- 1) Seventh graders smoke much less than 11th graders.
 - 2) The number of students who smoke has dropped for all age levels shown in the last two years.
 - 3) Although the number of 7th and 9th graders smoking has dropped several percent in two years, for 11th graders, the improvement over two years ago is slight.
 - 4) Children under age 18 wouldn't smoke if their parents didn't smoke.
 - 5) The number of students who smoke daily increases as they get older.
- C. Question B is what type? comprehension application analysis

2. A. As a school official, what action might you take on the basis of this information?
- 1) Have 7th graders talk to 11th graders about the dangers of smoking.
 - 2) Patrol the areas where 11th graders congregate to keep them from smoking.
 - 3) Increase the penalties for selling cigarettes to children.
 - 4) Ask student leaders to develop a campaign aimed at helping 9th-11th grade students resist tobacco marketing and peer pressure to begin smoking.
 - 5) Try to determine why students start to smoke in 9th – 11th grade in order to develop a plan that will address the causes.

B. Question A is what type? analysis application evaluation

The next two questions refer to the following graphs:



3. Which graph paints a rosier picture of the improvement in numbers of residents exercising at least five days a week? Graph A Graph B
4. The percents shown for each year are the same in both graphs. Why do the graphs look different? _____
5. Questions 3 and 4 are what type? analysis comprehension evaluation

The following graphic shows the same information as the two graphics above.

6. This graphic is a: graph chart
7. What is the advantage of using a graph instead of a chart? _____

Year	Percent of Residents Exercising At Least Five Days a Week
1999	48.0
2001	55.0
2003	56.7

Exercise

On the Social Studies Test, you will be using your general knowledge to make the best choice from the five options. Only one answer is correct, and there are no “trick” questions. After you have done your best, turn to page 13 for answers and explanations.

1. Before Columbus, followed by a series of explorers, landed in the Bahamas, the native cultures of North and South America had no draft animals or cattle. For this reason, these cultures did not develop:

- 1) the ability to preserve their meat
- 2) subsistence agriculture
- 3) the ability to spin and weave fabrics
- 4) wheeled vehicles or large plows
- 5) stone and metal tools

2. This is the coldest, windiest, highest (on average), and driest continent; during summer, more solar radiation reaches its surface than is received at the Equator in an equivalent period; it is mostly uninhabitable.

Source: www.cia.gov/cia/publications/Factbook/geos/ay.html#Intro

Which continent is it?

- 1) Antarctica
- 2) Asia
- 3) Africa
- 4) South America
- 5) Australia

3. In keeping with the Neutrality Acts, passed between 1935 and 1937 and modified in 1939 to allow the sale of arms to warring nations, the United States kept itself out of World War II from 1939 until December 1941 when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Why did the U.S. enter the war after this event?

- 1) The Hawaiians were going to revolt if we didn't avenge the lost ships and men.
- 2) We didn't want to look like cowards.
- 3) This was a direct attack on U.S. territory and gave the president the excuse he needed to put aside the Neutrality Acts.

- 4) We knew if we didn't enter the war, Europe would no longer trade with us.
- 5) We wanted to try out new weapons.

4. American retailers face intense competition to offer consumer goods at the lowest possible price. While this saves consumers money, what side effect could *damage* our economy?

- 1) Advertisers earn a greater share of the sales dollar to let consumers know of the low prices.
- 2) Shippers must charge more than before due to the rising cost of fuel.
- 3) Retail stores try to keep prices down by automating checkout equipment.
- 4) To offer products at lower prices, manufacturers move their plants to foreign countries where labor is cheap, leaving Americans out of a job.
- 5) Retailers use computer programs to help them control inventory.

5. Ratification of the constitution followed a process written into the constitution itself. In order for the constitution to be accepted, it had to be approved by:

- 1) all the countries of Europe
- 2) conventions in 9 of the 13 states
- 3) the business owners
- 4) everyone under 30 years of age
- 5) the governors of 11 of the 13 states

6. Under the constitution, individual states cannot do which of the following:

- 1) build highways
- 2) collect taxes
- 3) enact laws to protect children
- 4) build prisons
- 5) print their own money

7. Two agencies, the National Center for Education Statistics and Recruiting New Teachers, a think tank based in Washington, D.C., study teacher recruitment and retention. They have found that teachers leaving the profession and increased student enrollment will create the need for 2.4 million to 2.7 million teachers in the next decade. The need is highest in urban and rural areas, where there is an immediate need for teachers in all subject areas.

Source: LA Times, Careerbuilder, 11/23/03, p. E1.

Based on the preceding paragraph, what approach would improve a new teacher's chances of being hired?

- 1) Study a foreign language
- 2) Apply for positions in large cities
- 3) Demand higher pay to work with disadvantaged youth
- 4) Be prepared to move out of country
- 5) Move to the suburbs

8. Regarding the California election to recall Governor Gray Davis, student Andrew Lagomarsino commented in California State University, Sacramento's *The State Hornet*, that,

“Even among those who voted, many don't want to be bothered with a

substantive discussion of issues facing California. They want lower taxes for everybody. Even those millionaires loopy with private loopholes. Some say they are voting for the man. Others like the bland sound-bites. Some just like his movie star image.”

“Young people seem resigned to the fact that lousy representatives will be elected. They think that there is nothing they can do about it. They almost embrace wasting their votes for a few laughs (Gary Coleman got 13,015 votes?!).”

Source: *Forum*, October 15, 2003

Which statement best summarizes Lagomarsino's viewpoint?

- 1) It doesn't matter for whom you vote, just so they lower taxes.
- 2) Gary Coleman would have made a better governor than Schwarzenegger.
- 3) People who didn't bother to vote should not get to have lower taxes.
- 4) Voting is a waste of time because only lousy candidates run for office.
- 5) If you don't take the time to study the candidates and issues, you can't make a good voting decision.



Study Strategy: When checking your answers, read any explanations given for every answer, not just the ones you missed. You'll add both knowledge and test-taking savvy.

Answers and Explanations

Page 3, Words You Need to Know: 1. e 2. b 3. a 4. c 5. d

Page 4, Did You Catch That? 1. T 3. T 7. T 8. T 9. T

2. F—Always read and consider all five choices.
4. F—The legend explains the symbols used on that particular map.
5. F—A trend line, a line graph using dates on the horizontal axis, shows change over time.
6. F—NAFTA stands for North American Free Trade Agreement and deals with trade among the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.
10. F—You may retake any section of the GED up to three times each year, until you have taken all available versions of the test.

Page 8, Political Cartoons – Breaking the Code: Two conflicting points about cell phone use:

1. Using cell phones while driving can cause accidents.
2. Having a cell phone at the scene of an accident can speed emergency response, possibly saving lives.

Pages 9-10, Critical Thinking – Graphs and Charts

1. A. Graph
B. (3) is the best summary. (1), (2), and (5) are all true, but don't describe the relationship of the data as completely as (3). (4) may be true but is not supported by the information given.
C. Comprehension – the key word is *summary*
2. A. (5) would be the safest action to take since the information given does not suggest the causes or the best method for discouraging student smoking.
B. Application – you are asked to take an action based on the data presented.
3. Graph A
4. Graph A makes the increase look greater because it starts at 40%. Graph B shows the amount of increase when compared to the total population—100%.
5. Analysis – recognizing elements and organization of the material
6. Chart
7. A graph directly shows the relationship of data. The mind does not need to first read the numbers and then analyze them in order to understand their relationship.

Pages 11-12, Exercise

1. 4) Wheeled vehicles or large plows were of little use without animals to pull them. The Mayas did have the skills mentioned in answers 1,2,3, and 5.
2. 1) Antarctica. Check out the source—the CIA World Factbook offers a wealth of information on countries.
3. 3) The day after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, killing more than 2000 Americans and destroying 15 ships and 150 planes, President Roosevelt asked Congress to declare war on Japan. The key phrase is, “direct attack on U.S. territory.”
4. 4) Although the other choices are happening, they are either not damaging the economy (more advertising, improving inventory control, or automating checkouts) or are not caused by the competition to lower prices (higher fuel costs).
5. 2) The final article of the Constitution, Article VII, consists of one sentence: “The ratification of the conventions of nine states shall be sufficient for the establishment of this Constitution between the states so ratifying the same.”
6. 5) Think of the difficulties in trade or travel between states if each state had its own currency.
7. 2) The economic law of demand suggests that teachers will have no trouble selling their skills where the need is greatest, in either the inner cities or rural areas.
8. 5) Lagomarsino’s initial comment that people “don't want to be bothered with a substantive discussion of issues facing California” shows that he is concerned about how people are preparing to vote.