

# Charting the Course to 2002: A Summary of Changes to the GED Tests

TEST	What's the Same	What's Eliminated	What's Included for 2002
<p><b>Writing Skills</b> (renamed <b>Language Arts: Writing</b>)</p>	<p>45-minute essay; 3 item types (correction, revision, and construction shift); Sentence structure, usage, and mechanics; Informational documents ("passages"); Part I, multiple-choice, and Part II, essay; Examinee must complete both parts.</p>	<p>Spelling—except for homonyms, possessives, and contractions. Commas—only tested when they are used to eliminate confusion.</p>	<p>Business Communications (letters, memos, reports, applications, etc.); "How to" texts (e.g., dressing for success, leasing a car, planning a trip, etc.); both 200–300 words, 12–18 sentences. Organization—transitions, text divisions, topic sentences, and unity/coherence. Essay scoring rubric changes from 6-point to 4-point scale.</p>
<p><b>Social Studies</b></p>	<p>Multiple-choice in sets and single items; Measures comprehension, application, analysis, and evaluation; Covers history, geography, civics, government, and economics; National, global, and adult contexts; Text and visual sources.</p>	<p>Behavioral science—psychology, sociology, anthropology—not tested as separate content area; some concepts tested within context of other areas.</p>	<p>More history, civics, and government; More graphics, photographs; More clearly defined content in U.S. and world history; More analysis; Different content areas tested within same item set; More single-item questions; At least one "practical" document (voters' guide, tax form, etc.); At least one excerpt from <i>U.S. Constitution</i>, <i>Declaration of Independence</i>, <i>Federalist Papers</i>, or landmark Supreme Court cases.</p>
<p><b>Science</b></p>	<p>Multiple-choice in sets and single items; Text and visual sources.</p>	<p>More single items, fewer item sets.</p>	<p>Integrated with National Science Education Content Standards; Earth science includes space science; Physical science includes physics and chemistry; Increased focus on environmental and health topics (recycling, heredity, disease prevention, pollution, climate) and on science's relevance to everyday life; 50% conceptual understanding; 50% problem-solving. Increase in graphic stimuli from 30% to 50%.</p>
<p><b>Interpreting Literature and the Arts</b> (renamed <b>Language Arts: Reading</b>)</p>	<p>Reflect diversity—gender, ethnicity, age, region; Passages range from 300–400 words; One poem (8–25 lines) and one piece of drama represented; No graphics, viewing addressed in textual manner.</p>	<p>Definitions: Popular Text and Classical Literature redefined as time periods; "Literal comprehension" now "comprehension"; "Inferential comprehension" now "synthesis."</p>	<p>Content areas defined by type of text: Literary (75%) and Nonfiction (25%); At least one comparison/contrast question, Nonfiction will include one business document and one selection about visual representation; 20% comprehension, 15% application, 30–35% analysis, 30–35% synthesis.</p>
<p><b>Mathematics</b></p>	<p>Measures algebra, geometry, number relations, and data analysis. 25% set-up questions—examinee must identify correct way to solve problem.</p>	<p>"Not sufficient information" questions decreased from 12% to 4%.</p>	<p>More emphasis on data analysis and statistics; Two parts: Part I permits calculator, Part II does not; Candidate will have practice time with calculator prior to test; Alternate Format items approximately 20%; Item sets in which candidate must access multiple pieces of information—pie charts, bar graphs, tables. All candidates will use Casio fx-260 Solar.</p>