

### **Introduction:**

Among the first questions asked by many GED-i students are, “How long will this take me?” or “When will I be ready to take the test?” The typical answer is, “That depends on you...” As more and more students are using the GED-i system and achieving success, GED-i team members are fielding similar questions from instructors and administrators. As a direct result of the requests from the field, we have pooled our many resources and created a *GED-i Fast Track Guide*. Experienced GED-i instructors identified their top 32 ‘must do’ lessons that GED-i students should complete in order to be prepared for the tests. Their recommendations are provided, along with the rationale for their inclusion and the connections to the GED Tests.

The teachers, coordinators, and GED-i team members who provided information and lesson selections include:

- Emilie McCallister, Joliet Junior College, Joliet, Illinois
- Linda Crooks, Rock Valley Community College, Rock Valley, Illinois
- Stephanie Rue, Regional Office of Education #40, Carlinville, Illinois
- Marilyn Woelfel, Regional Office of Education #40, Carlinville, Illinois
- Misty Miller, Regional Office of Education #40, Carlinville, Illinois
- Kimberly Stoll-French, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, Illinois
- Angie Dunlap, Illinois Valley Community College, Oglesby, Illinois
- Kathleen O’Brien, Black Hawk Community College, Moline, Illinois
- Lin Malachowski, School District 61, Decatur, Illinois

In addition to identifying the top 32 lessons, the team developed criteria for screening potential GED-i Fast Track students. By requesting that students meet the screening criteria, programs and teachers ensure that students enter the rigorous online experience prepared to reach their goals by following their instructors’ guidance and completing the assigned lessons in a timely manner. When working with properly selected students in a curriculum that focuses on fundamental skills, students have the potential to be ready for the GED Tests within approximately 8 weeks.

### **Criteria for GED-i Fast Track Students:**

Often, GED-i students want their preparation to occur over night. They wish their knowledge gaps would magically vanish so they can their test within days. Students frequently do not understand the amount of commitment and level of academic skills that are necessary to move through the GED Test Preparation course and become successful GED Test candidates. When students are ill prepared for the rigorous demands of a fast track curriculum, both the instructor and students become frustrated. The suggested criteria for GED-i Fast Track students include the following:

- A TABE or CASAS score that reflects a minimum of 11<sup>th</sup> grade reading and math. Students with these skills can prepare solely at a distance, in the traditional classroom, or in a blended method. **Note:** If the program does not use the TABE or CASAS math, another program-specific option can be selected.  
*Rationale: The lessons selected for the Fast Track focus on fundamental skills needed for test preparation. The students must have an existing foundation of skills on which to build.*
- Strong computer skills. This means the students can navigate the Internet, use basic computer programs such as Word, access email and attach documents.  
*Rationale: The Fast Track students need to focus on content and have very limited time to learn how to use the technology.*

- Reliable access to the Internet. Students must have a plan to access the GED-i curriculum at home, at the adult education program, or at a local library. The students should be able to identify a structured time when they will work on GED-i if the plan is to access it outside of home. Accessing GED-i from a friend's or family member's house is not a reliable plan because if there are difficulties with the relationships, access to the Internet is no longer reliable.  
*Rationale: Reliable access to the Internet means that the GED-i students can log into the site at a regularly scheduled time in order to move through the designated curriculum in a timely manner.*
- Willingness to complete at least 6 lessons per week. There are 32 suggested lessons. If students want to complete the Fast Track in a timely manner, they need to devote at least 6 hours per week to lessons. This commitment is much more demanding than the typical 3 to 5 lessons per week suggested for the traditional GED-i student.  
*Rationale: Students who have the required reading, math, and computer skills are ready to focus on the core fundamentals for GED Test Preparation. This focus on fundamental skills is designed to provide a refresher, and students are expected to move through the curriculum at an advanced pace.*
- Ability to follow directions and meet the goals identified in the learning plan. The teacher will provide instruction on which lessons need to be completed and offer feedback that includes steps for remediation when necessary.  
*Rationale: Following directions is important for all GED-i students, but for students enrolled in the Fast Track, following instructions is critical in order to stay on task and complete the studies in a timely manner.*

The suggested criteria have been established in order to provide an overview of the capabilities that GED-i students must exhibit that are beyond that of the traditional learner. Once students have been identified as Fast Track candidates, it is time to create their instructional plans, which outline expectations and timelines, and get them started in GED-i.

### **Getting Started:**

When GED-i students leave orientation, they need an instructional plan that outlines their expectations. This instructional plan can be developed using *The GED-i Fast Track Tracking Forms* and *GED-i Fast Track Student Agreement*, which help guide students through the process in an organized and structured manner.

Once GED-i students have been identified as Fast Track candidates, they should complete an orientation that provides the following information:

- How to navigate GED-i.  
*Rationale: The student should be prepared to begin working with content immediately after the GED-i Orientation.*
- Detailed starting point / first assignment.  
*Rationale: When students leave orientation, they need to know exactly where and when to start working online. The GED-i Fast Track Tracking Form can help o make the first assignment clear.*

- A goal date for taking the GED exam.  
*Rationale: Setting the goal date helps keep students on task as they can ‘see’ how procrastination can hinder progress.*
- Expectations clearly outlined for submitting at least 6 lessons each week.  
*Rationale: In order to meet their goal for completing the required lessons, students need to agree to a demanding academic schedule.*
- Expectations for reading feedback and completing supplemental assignments.  
*Rationale: The GED-i curriculum is intended to be an instructor-facilitated course. Students need to understand and agree to follow instructors’ directions when it comes to their GED Preparation.*

The next two pages contain the *GED-i Fast Track Tracking Form* and the *GED-i Fast Track Student Agreement*. Printable forms are located at the end of this document. For help on how to get GED-i students started, contact [support@cait.org](mailto:support@cait.org) for instructions on accessing the guide, *GED-i: A Structured Orientation*.

Directions: Use the *GED-i Fast Track Tracking Form* to document your progress as you work through the ‘must do’ GED-i lessons. Remember, you will need to complete at least 6 lessons per week in order to move through this curriculum in a timely manner. This form is designed to help you remain focused and organized throughout your online experience. Once you have completed the lessons listed here, you are ready to take a GED Practice Test and then the actual GED Tests.

**Goal Date for GED Tests** \_\_\_\_\_

Date Assigned	Date Completed	Modules, Units, and Lessons
<b>Language Arts: Writing</b>		
		Pre-Survey
		Unit 1 Lesson 2: Capitalization
		Unit 1 Lesson 4: Understanding Sentence Structure
		Unit 2 Lesson 4: Sentences and Paragraphs
		Unit 2 Lesson 5: Writing Paragraphs
		Unit 3 Lesson 1: Process of Writing an Essay
		Unit 3 Lesson 3: Writing the GED Essay
		Unit 3 Lesson 4: Scoring the GED Essay
<b>Language Arts: Reading</b>		
		Pre-Survey
		Unit 1 Lesson 1: Understanding Non-Fiction

		Unit 1 Lesson 3: Supporting Details
		Unit 1 Lesson 4: Applying Ideas
		Unit 1 Lesson 6: Identifying Style and Tone
		Unit 2 Lesson 3: Analyze Elements
		Unit 2 Lesson 6: Extended Synthesis
		Unit 2 Lesson 7: Synthesizing Information Using Comparison and Contrast
		Unit 3 Lesson 1: Understanding Poetry
		Unit 3 Lesson 2: Understanding Figurative Language to Interpret Poetry
		Unit 3 Lesson 3: A Step-by-Step Approach to Interpreting a Poem
<b>Social Studies</b>		
		Pre-Survey
		Unit 1 Lesson 1: Map Reading
		Unit 3 Lesson 1: Modern American Government
		Unit 4 Lesson 2: Applying Ideas/Concepts to New Contexts
<b>Science</b>		
		Pre-Survey
		Unit 1 Lesson 1: Science as Inquiry
		Unit 1 Lesson 2: Molecular Basis of Heredity
		Unit 3 Lesson 4: Interactions of Energy and Matter
		Unit 4 Lesson 1: Energy and the Earth System
		Unit 5 Lesson 2: World Population
		Unit 6 Lesson 1: Systems, Order, and Organization
<b>Math</b>		
		Pre-Survey
		Unit 1 Lesson 1: Using the Standards Grid with Fractions and Decimals
		Unit 1 Lesson 11: Understanding Simple Interest
		Unit 2 Lesson 3: Measures of Central Tendency and Mean and Median
		Unit 2 Lesson 5: Graphs
		Unit 3 Lesson 3: Exponents and Square Roots, Factoring, and Inequalities
		Unit 4 Lesson 4: Pythagorean Relationship

This form reinforces the anticipated GED Test date along with organizing the ‘must do’ lessons in a clear manner. GED-i students can easily see where they are, monitor their progress, and remain focused.

### **GED-i Fast Track Student Agreement:**

I, \_\_\_\_\_,  
agree

to do the following in order to participate in the GED-i Fast Track program. I will:

1. Use the GED-i Tracking Form to monitor my GED-i progress.
2. Complete and submit a minimum of 6 GED-i activities/lessons per week.
3. Check my e-mail as scheduled with my instructor.
4. Check and acknowledge feedback from my instructor on completed activities.
5. Redo and resubmit lessons when less than the 70% minimum success rate is achieved.
6. Post-test on a day and time designated by my instructor. \*(See below)
7. Contact my instructor via phone or e-mail with questions or for further clarification as needed.
8. Notify my instructor when my GED Test results are received
9. Keep my instructor informed of any concerns, issues, etc. that I have regarding the GED-i program

\*I, (student's signature) \_\_\_\_\_, agree to post-test on

(date) \_\_\_\_\_ at (time) \_\_\_\_\_.

The above listed items have been reviewed with me and I agree to the terms of participation in the GED-i program as listed. I will begin my GED-i Course with the Pre-Survey on \_\_\_\_\_.

The GED-i Fast Track Student Agreement will reinforce the students' expectations so they are aware of the steps needed to be successful with this method of GED Preparation. When students meet the criteria for participation, complete the student agreement, and have the tracking forms that identify the 32 top recommended lessons for GED-i, they begin their online experience with clearly defined expectations, structure and organization for their coursework, and a target date for taking their GED Tests.

### **Top 32 Lessons for the GED-i Fast Track**

The following information provides a detailed list of the lessons in the tracking form with rationale for the lesson selections. Additionally, there are connections between the identified lessons and the content on the GED Tests.

### **Pre-Surveys**

The most frequently suggested task for fast tracking GED-i students is completing the Pre-Surveys in each module. It is important to note that the GED-i students do not need to complete all of the Pre-Surveys at one time. This is a decision that can be made by the instructor. As Lin Malachowski shared, "I always assign them [the pre-surveys] to start. I have found that not only does it give the students a preview of what the GED Test will be like, but it also shows them the length and scope of

the real test. I have found that if a student is able to score 75% or more on the Pre-Survey, they are well prepared for the GED Test with little or no additional study. In the past I have had several students who earned GED-i Pre-Survey scores in the 80-90% range. On the GED Test that translated to scores between 2600-3000.”

### Language Arts: Writing

Part I: There are 50 multiple-choice questions on the Language Arts, Writing Test, Part I. These questions require you to revise and edit workplace, how-to, and informational documents. They are divided among the following three question types: correction, revision, and construction shift. These questions address the following content areas:

- **Organization (15%):** Restructure paragraphs or ideas within paragraphs, identify topic sentences, and create unity and coherence in the document.
- **Sentence Structure (30%):** Correct sentence fragments, run-on sentences, comma splices, improper coordination and subordination, misplaced modifiers, and lack of parallel structure.
- **Usage (30%):** Correct errors in subject-verb agreement, verb tense, and pronoun reference.
- **Mechanics (25%):** Correct errors in capitalization, punctuation, and spelling (restricted to errors related to possessives, contractions, and homonyms).

Part II: The second part of the Language Arts, Writing Test consists of writing an essay on a general topic. Part II assesses your ability to write an essay about a familiar subject. The essay topic will require test candidates to present an opinion or explain views about the assigned topic. Source-GEDTS®

### Sentence Structure

- *U1L2-Capitalization.* This lesson reviews the rules of capitalization and provides a lesson learning check applying these rules to help students prepare for the type of editing required for the test.
- *U1L4-Understanding Sentence Structure.* This lesson provides a good review for all students and strengthens their knowledge before they begin writing the essay.

### Usage, Paragraph Organization, and Writing

- *U2L4-Sentences and Paragraphs.* The focus of this lesson is misplaced and dangling modifiers. Since most of us write how we talk, this lesson reminds students how to correctly communicate.
- *U2L5-Writing Paragraphs.* This lesson explains the elements of a paragraph and how to organize paragraph details when writing essays.

### Essay Writing

- *U3L1-Process of Writing an Essay.* This lesson identifies the four-step process for writing an essay, including thesis statement, organization, and editing.

- *U3L3-Writing the GED Essay.* Students learn to understand the process of writing an essay and what is required for the GED Writing Skills Test essay. This is a must for GED Test takers.

***From the Field*** Our contributors shared, “Follow up this lesson with additional essay topics, either via the Discussion Board or email. Students could include a completed essay for review. The feedback includes an evaluation based on the scoring rubric with instruction on how to improve their essay.”

- *U3L4-Scoring the GED Essay.* Students will understand the scoring rubric for an essay and the criteria for writing a passing essay.
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### Language Arts: Reading

The Language Arts, Reading Test contains 40 multiple-choice questions that measure the ability to comprehend and interpret workplace and academic reading selections, and to apply those interpretations to new contexts. The questions ask you to understand, apply, analyze, and synthesize information in the reading selections.

Literary texts constitute 75% of each test and include at least one selection from each of the following areas:

- \* Poetry
- \* Drama
- \* Prose fiction, before 1920
- \* Prose fiction, between 1920 and 1960
- \* Prose fiction, after 1960

Nonfiction texts constitute 25% of each test and include two selections of nonfiction prose from any two of the following areas:

- \* Nonfiction prose
  - \* Critical review of visual and performing arts
  - \* Workplace and community documents, such as mission and goal statements, rules for employee behavior, legal documents, and communications (for example, letters and excerpts from manuals)
- Source- GEDTS®

The Language Arts Reading Module has several lessons that are considered ‘must do’ for many reasons. In order to be successful GED Test candidates, students must be able to read critically. The lessons selected will help target specific skills necessary for the Language Arts Reading test while also teaching skills that are transferable to all test subject areas.

### Understanding Nonfiction

- *U1L1-Understanding Nonfiction.* This lesson addresses how to locate the main idea and use critical reading skills on real world documents. Examples of questions similar to the GED Reading Test are provided.
  - *U1L3-Supporting Details.* Students will learn how to identify supporting details. This is a ‘must do’ lesson because the skill is transferable to all GED content areas.
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- *U1L4-Applying Ideas*. Students will learn how to apply knowledge to new situations. This is a ‘must do’ lesson as the skills are transferable to all GED content areas.
- *U1L6-Identifying Style and Tone*. Most students have problems picking out the tone of a story. This lesson provides specific strategies that help students identify the writer’s style and tone.

**From the Field** Barb Sabaj, GED-i instructor from District 214 shared the following online resources that can help with tone, “Here is an online resource for Tone and Voice which we usually do orally. There is a site called gabcast.com that allows you to create voice files and post them free at the site. Also, there is a free, easy MP3 creator called Wavosaur at [www.wavosaur.com](http://www.wavosaur.com). The instructor can read the GED-i selection into it and then e-mail the MP3 file to the students so they can hear the selection with the GED-i open.”

### Understanding Fiction

- *U2L3-Analyze Elements*. Students will learn the important elements of a story and how to analyze those elements. This will help the students in all areas of the GED test.
- *U2L6-Extended Synthesis*. Synthesis questions will be found throughout the GED Test subjects. Students need to understand the type of question, and what it takes to answer the question.
- *U2L7-Synthesizing Information Using Compare and Contrast*. This is a difficult skill for many students. Working through the lesson helps to make clear both “synthesis” and “compare/contrast”.

### Poetry

- *U3L1-Understanding Poetry*. Poetry is a different form of writing that a GED student may not have previously experienced. This lesson explores how poetry is different from other forms of writing.
- *U3L2-Using Figurative Language to Interpret Poetry*. Generally the most difficult aspect of the GED Language Arts Reading Test, this lesson provides a great review of the types of figurative language utilized in poetry, and how to read and interpret it.
- *U3L3-Step by Step Approach to Interpreting a Poem*. This will help students to break down poetry that is on the GED test.

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### Social Studies

The Social Studies Test contains 50 multiple-choice questions from the following content areas:

- \* History (United States or Canada, 25%; World, 15%)
- \* Geography (15%)
- \* Civics and Government (25%)
- \* Economics (20%)

Most of the test questions are based on written and visual texts drawn from a variety of sources, including academic and workplace texts, as well as primary and secondary sources. The information

may be one or more paragraphs, a chart, table, graph, map, photograph, cartoon, or figure. To answer the questions in the Social Studies Test you must understand, apply, analyze, or evaluate the information provided.

The Social Studies portion of the GED exam includes graphs, charts, and visuals. The lessons selected include directions and strategies for understanding visuals and graphics. These ‘must do’ lessons also include information on how to critically read questions and content. Source- GEDTS®

### United States History

- *U1L1-Map Reading*. Map reading skills are essential for the GED test and have real-world application.

### Government and Law

- *U3L1-Modern American Government* (uses charts and passages, uses critical thinking skills). Whether students have just passed their Constitution test or passed it years ago, this lesson provides students with information that can assist them in taking their GED test.

### Economic Principles

- *U4L2-Applying Ideas/Concepts to New Contexts*. The information/instruction in this lesson can be applied throughout the GED Tests. As one of the higher level thinking skills, “synthesis” questions will be posed throughout the GED Test subjects.

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### Science

The GED Science Test consists of 50 multiple-choice questions in the following content areas:

- \* Physical Science (physics and chemistry) (35%)
- \* Life Science (45%)
- \* Earth and Space Science (20%)

The GED Test questions require students to understand, interpret, or apply information presented in a paragraph, chart, table, graph, map, or figure. Source- GEDTS®

The GED-i Science lessons were selected based on their diversity and broad exposure to the science content area. Additionally, many of the concepts covered in these lessons have application for all GED Test content areas.

### Scientific Methods and Technology

- *U1L1-Science as Inquiry*. This lesson covers how to find the main idea and supporting details in a science passage. There are also multiple graphics that help reinforce the visual skills needed in this section.
- *U1L2-Science as Inquiry*. Understanding the scientific method is one key to “unlocking” the mysteries of science. This lesson provides a great overview and an explanation of the steps that scientists utilize in experimenting and making discoveries across all areas of science.

### Physical Science

- *U3L4-Interactions of Energy and Matter*: This lesson provides students with instruction in applying critical thinking and analysis skills that focus on science, but can be applied to all GED content areas.

### Space and Earth

- *U4L1-Energy in the Earth System*. On the GED Test, you will be required to have a basic understanding of the Earth, its make-up, and what is happening inside the Earth. This lesson helps build science vocabulary while using graphs, charts, diagrams, and tables.

### Science in Personal and Social Perspective

- *U5L2-World Population*. This lesson provides a great deal of information in graphs and maps, requiring students to make inferences.

### Unifying Concepts and Processes

- *U6L1-Systems, Order and Organization*. This lesson provides practice in synthesizing information to determine how systems, order, and organizations influence each other.
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## Math

The Mathematics Test assesses your understanding of mathematical concepts and the application of those concepts to various real-world situations. The following four major areas are covered on the Mathematics Test:

- \* Number operations and number sense (20%–30%)
- \* Measurement and geometry (20%–30%)
- \* Data analysis, statistics, and probability (20%–30%)
- \* Algebra, functions, and patterns (20%–30%)

Source- GEDTS®

GED-i Fast Track students must have at least a 10<sup>th</sup> grade math skill level. The lessons selected for this section provide students with time to refresh the critical skills necessary to pass the GED Math Test.

### Number, Operation, and Number Sense

- *U1L1-Using the Standard Grid with Fractions and Decimals*. This lesson provides a detailed explanation of how to answer the alternate and format grids in the Math test.
- *U1L11-Understanding Simple Interest*. As Emilie McCallister shares, “The formula for computing simple interest is quite ‘simple’ -- but students often miss the different forms of time that they are likely to see on the GED Math Test, i.e.: months only (6 months, ¼ year, etc.) or years and months (18 month loan, 33 month CD, etc.).”

### Measurement and Data Analysis

- *U2L4-Tables & Charts*. This lesson provides insight and instruction on how to understand tables and charts. This skill applies to all GED Test content areas, but is extremely important in the Math section.

***From the Field*** In the feedback, always comment on the importance of reading the table/chart before looking at the question(s) -- including titles, subtitles, units of measurement, labels, etc.

- *U2L5 –Graphs*. Students will be presented with a number of graphs in different subjects. In the Math module, learning to read the graphs (titles, subtitles, axis information, units of measurement, etc.) are skills that will be required to compute correct answers.

### Algebra

- *U3L3-Exponents, Square Roots, Factoring, and Inequalities*. This lesson is packed with information and instruction that students will need in many areas of math, including geometry.

### Geometry

- *U4L4-Pythagorean Relationship*. The GED Testing Service has indicated that a solid understanding of the Pythagorean Relationship and the ability to solve word problems using the Pythagorean Relationship are among the “key skills” needed to pass the GED Math Test.

The *GED-i Fast Track Guide* outlines the fundamental academic skills in each subject area that a GED test candidate needs to have in order to be successful. Additionally, suggested criteria, tracking forms, and student agreements are shared. With the guidance, instruction, and support provided by the teacher, when the student asks, “How long until I get my GED?”, a confident answer can be, “Let’s talk about putting you in a Fast Track program. If you are willing to work on a daily basis and follow my directions, then you can be prepared for the test in a few weeks!”



## A Focus on Fundamentals

Directions: Use the GED-i Fast Track Tracking Form to document your progress as you work through the ‘must do’ GED-i lessons. Remember, you will need to complete at least 6 lessons per week in order to move through this curriculum in a timely manner. This form is designed to help you remain focused and organized throughout your online experience. Once you have completed the lessons listed here, you are ready to take a GED Practice Test and then the actual GED Tests.

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		Unit 6 Lesson 1: Systems, Order, and Organization
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		Unit 1 Lesson 11: Understanding Simple Interest
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## A Focus on Fundamentals

### **GED-i Fast Track Student Agreement:**

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to do the following in order to participate in the GED-i Fast Track program. I will:

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4. Check and acknowledge feedback from my instructor on completed activities.
5. Redo and resubmit lessons when less than the 70% minimum success rate is achieved.
6. Post-test on a day and time designated by my instructor. \*(See below)
7. Contact my instructor via phone or e-mail with questions or for further clarification as needed.
8. Notify my instructor when my GED Test results are received
9. Keep my instructor informed of any concerns, issues, etc. that I have regarding the GED-i program

\*I, (student's signature) \_\_\_\_\_, agree to post-test on

(date) \_\_\_\_\_ at (time) \_\_\_\_\_.

The above listed items have been reviewed with me, and I agree to the terms of participation in the GED-i program as listed. I will begin my GED-i Course with the Pre-Survey on \_\_\_\_\_.