

Domain 3: Conventions of Written Language. The writer uses the conventions of written standard American English.

- Appropriate usage (clear pronoun references, subject-verb agreement, etc.)
- Appropriate mechanics (spelling, capitalization, punctuation, etc.)

Domain 4: Sentence Formation. The writer forms sentences correctly.

- Appropriate end punctuation
- Complete sentences or functional fragments
- Appropriate coordination and subordination

For additional information . . .

contact your high school, local school system test coordinator, or the Georgia Department of Education.

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Georgia High School Graduation Tests



English/Language Arts
Mathematics
Science
Social Studies
Writing

Georgia Department of Education
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State Superintendent of Schools
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Introduction

The Georgia Department of Education has developed this brochure for Georgia high school students and their parents, their teachers and counselors, and other persons who need information about the Georgia High School Graduation Tests.

Questions and Answers

Why does the Department of Education administer the Georgia High School Graduation Tests?

In 1991, Georgia law O. C. G. A., section 20-2-281 was passed, which requires that curriculum-based assessments be administered in grade 11 for graduation purposes. The Department, together with Georgia educators, developed and administers the English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies Tests in response to this law.

To whom do these tests apply?

All students who entered ninth grade since July 1, 1994, must pass all five tests as one of the requirements for earning a high school diploma. These requirements apply to all students, regardless of the type of diploma or diploma seal they are seeking.

When are the tests given?

Students take the graduation tests for the first time in their junior year. The Writing test is given in the fall and the four content area tests are given in the spring.

How many opportunities does a student have to take the tests?

As the chart indicates, students have five opportunities to take each of the tests before the end of the twelfth grade. The dates for each test administration are listed on the Department of Education website. Students have one opportunity to take the test during each test administration.

Administration	Writing	Content Areas
Grade 11 Fall (September/October)	First	
Grade 11 Spring (March/April)	Retest	First
Grade 11/12 Summer	Retest	Retest
Grade 12 Fall (September/October)	Retest	Retest
Grade 12 Winter (November/December)	-----	Retest
Grade 12 Spring (March/April)	Retest	Retest

What happens if a student does not pass all the required tests?

Students who do not pass all the required tests but have met all other graduation requirements may be eligible for a High School Certificate or a Special Education Diploma. Any student who has left school with a Certificate or a Special Education Diploma may return to re-take the graduation test(s) again, as often as needed, in order to qualify for a high school diploma.

Students wishing to return for re-testing should contact their local high school prior to the date of the test administration and provide two sets of photo identification for personal verification.

Content of the Tests

The Georgia High School Graduation Tests cover only a sample of the knowledge and skills that constitute a complete high school education. A Georgia high school graduate will have had opportunities to learn – and is expected to have mastered – much more than these tests can address. The knowledge and skills assessed on the graduation tests were selected by Georgia educators and curriculum specialists. These tests are based on the standards specified in the Quality Core Curriculum as established by the State Board of Education and revised in November 1997.

The Georgia Department of Education has published a detailed Test Content Description for each of the content area tests and a Georgia High School Writing Test Instructional Guide for the Writing test. The Test Content Descriptions are also available on the Department’s web site (<http://www.doe.k12.ga.us>).

Following are brief descriptions of the range of knowledge and skills covered in the content area tests and the scoring criteria applied to the Writing test. The percentage figures indicate how much weight is given to each subarea or strand of the total test.

Social Studies

World Studies (18-20%) Items test major themes of world history and world geography. World history topics include exploration, change, and world wars. World geography topics include cultural and physical geography and the relationship between geography and human activity.

U. S. History to 1865 (18-20%) Items test information related to early inhabitants of North America and exploration of the New World, Colonial America, the Revolutionary Era, the Constitutional Era, the growth of the nation, the Civil War, and Reconstruction.

U. S. History Since 1865 (18-20%) Items test expansion and development of the nation, the nation becoming a world power, and the modern nation. The American economic system, organized labor, the banking system, and command and market economies are also included.

Civics/Citizenship (12-14%) Items in this strand, known as Citizenship/Government in earlier forms of the tests, assess the structure and functions of government (local, state, and national), the role of the citizen, legal issues, individual rights and responsibilities, and Constitutional amendments.

Map and Globe Skills (15%) Items test map features such as scale, direction, grids, keys, and legends. Various types of maps are used in current and historical settings to assess students’ abilities to gather and interpret information and relate that information to events.

Information Processing Skills (15%) Items test several skills including identifying the main idea in a passage, separating fact and opinion, interpreting charts and tables, recognizing different types of information sources, and using information from multiple sources to solve a problem.

English/Language Arts

Reading/Literature (47-49%) Items test students’ ability to read and respond to literature and other written material. Skills include literal and inferential comprehension. Also tested are such literary concepts as point of view, tone, figurative language, plot, and historical aspects of American literature.

Critical Thinking (37–39%) Items test the use of thinking skills in English and other academic areas. Examples include drawing conclusions, generalizing, recognizing fallacies, separating fact from opinion, and understanding logical relationships.

Writing/Usage/Grammar (14-16%) Items test knowledge of grammar and mechanics of standard American English as well as levels of usage. Other language/writing skills are assessed in the Writing test.

Mathematics

Number & Computation (17-19%) Items test uses and properties of numbers, operations, computing with integers, decimals, fractions, percents, and proportions. Real-world applications include various aspects of using money as well as estimation and problem solving (which operation to use).

Data Analysis (19-21%) Items test use of exact and approximate numbers, probability, and reading and interpreting graphs, charts, and tables. Statistical measures such as mean, median, mode, and range are also assessed.

Measurement and Geometry (32-34%) Items test estimation and determination of length, area, volume, weight, time, and temperature. Similar and congruent figures, use of proportions to find missing sides of figures, and use of scale drawings are also assessed. The coordinate plane is tested, as well as geometric properties and figures, solving problems with angles, and use of the Pythagorean theorem.

Algebra (28-30%) Items test algebraic principles such as evaluating and simplifying algebraic expressions, solving equations, and ratios and proportions.

Science Test

Process/Research Skills (30-32%) Items test processes and skills common to all areas of science: use of resources, experimental design, and reading and interpreting data presented in tables, charts, or other formats.

Physical Science (33-35%) Items test all areas of physical science, including chemical concepts. Specific topics include properties of matter, electricity, acids and bases, pH, force, work, wave motion, and energy transfer. Most items present physical concepts in real-world situations.

Biology (33-35%) Items test knowledge of the cellular basis of life, animal and plant systems, reproduction, genetics, classification schemes, ecology, and principles of environmental conservation.

Writing

Students must write a persuasive essay on an assigned topic. Their essay is read by at least two trained professionals who independently judge each essay on four qualities or “domains” of effective writing: content/organization, style, conventions of written language, and sentence formation. In the overall score for an essay, content/organization counts for twice as much as the other three domains.

Domain 1: Content/Organization. The writer establishes the controlling idea through examples, illustrations, facts, or details. There is evidence of a sense of order that is clear and relevant.

- Response to assigned task
- Clearly established controlling idea
- Sufficiently relevant supporting ideas
- Clearly developed supporting ideas
- Clearly discernible order of presentation
- Logical transitions and flow of ideas
- Sense of completeness

Domain 2: Style. The writer controls language to establish his or her individuality.

- Effective diction
- Varied and effective sentence structure
- Tone consistent with topic and purpose
- Sense of audience