

Teaching Tips—Mathematics

The GED Mathematics Test comprises 50 questions and is divided into two sections of 25 questions each. In Part 1, calculator use is allowed, and in Part 2, calculator use is not allowed. About 40 of the total 50 questions on the Mathematics Test are multiple choice; the remaining 10 are in an alternate format. Alternate-format questions require the test-taker to record answers on either standard or coordinate plane grids. Both Parts 1 and 2 of the test include multiple-choice, standard grid, and coordinate plane grid questions.

Below are some general tips that GED instructors should provide to their students as they prepare for the Mathematics Test.

- At the test center, all test-takers will be provided with a *Casio fx-260* calculator to use on Part 1 of the Mathematics Test. Make sure that your students are familiar in advance with the basic operations of this or a similar scientific calculator. Basic directions for using the calculator are provided in the *GED Information Bulletin* and on the actual test.
- Remind your students that, during the actual test administration, they must return their calculators to the GED Examiner before they will be given Part 2 of the Mathematics Test.
- The coordinate plane grid requires the test-taker to fill in only one circle to indicate a response. Emphasize to your students that, if they fill in more than one circle on the graph, their answers will automatically be scored as incorrect. See page 14 of the *GED Information Bulletin* to view a sample coordinate plane grid. This page also appears in the actual test booklets.
- See page 14 of the *GED Information Bulletin* to view a sample standard grid. Make sure that your students practice the acceptable ways of writing responses with decimal numbers and fractions on the grid and filling in the corresponding circles. Remind students that, for standard grid questions, answers can never be a negative number because the grid does not accommodate negative numbers.
- The test booklets for Parts 1 and 2 include a list of mathematical formulas to which students may refer at any time while they are taking the Mathematics Test. However, for their own convenience and efficiency during testing, make sure that your students know in advance what formulas appear on this list. In addition, ask your students to practice using these formulas before the actual test. See page 14 of the *GED Information Bulletin* to view the formulas page.

- Remind students that some questions will provide more information than is actually needed to answer them. Help your students determine which information is relevant to particular question types.
- Help your students to carefully read the questions to make sure that they know exactly what information is required. Sometimes, students may need to perform a series of steps in order to obtain the information that the question demands; their first calculation may not be at all what the question asks.
- Help your students to use their personal experience to solve the problems. The settings used for the problems in the Mathematics Test are usually realistic. For example, in a test question that requires a student to compute weekly earnings, remind your students to ask themselves, “How would I calculate my weekly earnings?”
- Remind your students that they should not assume that lines in diagrams are parallel or perpendicular unless that information is given in the question-- either in words or symbols. This rule is true even when the lines look parallel or perpendicular.
- Although diagrams on the Mathematics Test are as realistic as possible, students should not assume that they are drawn to scale unless the question explicitly makes such a statement.