

New Fast Track Ebook+ not just for eReaders

INITIALLY, KET DECIDED to convert the *GED Connection Fast Track* workbook into an ebook to make it more accessible to individual learners. Then teachers stopped by the booth at COABE and said, "Great! I could project it onto my whiteboard and work with the whole class!" New possibilities opened up.

"We were delighted," says Nancy Carpenter, senior director for education at KET, "but not at all surprised. Teachers are so adaptive, and they're always looking for ways to get more out of their resources. It's a great way to use [the ebook] in the classroom, and learners studying for GED® test still have the option of working independently."

Teachers are still pilot testing, but initial feedback is positive.

Unlike a typical ebook, the *Fast Track Ebook+* also

offers streaming video and free online GED® practice tests for learners with Internet access. That's why they call it an ebook+ instead of just an ebook.

The streaming video won't play on a Kindle or Nook (though the book itself works beautifully), and devices vary, but navigation is easy and most features of this ebook+ work on computers, tablets, and smart phones.

The *Fast Track Ebook+* is available three ways: individual license with downloads to two devices, multi-user site license with downloads to 11-49 devices, and unlimited campus site license.

A short video showing all the features is on the website at www.ketadultlearning.org. 



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Worthwhile websites

Many websites provide useful tools and information for adult educators. Here are some we encourage you to explore. If you have a favorite website you'd like for us to share, please send us an email at adulted@ket.org.

Take the **TED-Ed** tour!



ed.TED.com

TED Ed is launching a **flipped video** platform that should prove helpful to schools. If you haven't heard about it, watch the demo video. Basically, educators can take the instructional videos on TED or ANY video on YouTube, and then **add questions** and **check student responses** through the TED website.

ket.org/encyclomedia

Watch **real adult education** teachers in real classroom settings as they provide you with teaching strategies. Educators will find effective **techniques** for promoting group discussion, encouraging critical thinking, and managing the classroom environment. Simply go to the Teachers' Domain section and click "Adult Education."



The Entitlement Creed, at www.youtube.com/watch?v=8cPuH8jg5nQ

"I'm entitled to a job because I have gone to college and worked hard," states one young man. **Really?** Want your learners to know what the work environment is really like and what employers believe *they* are "entitled" to? Then this site is for you (and them) with **straight talk** from actual employers on what they need and expect from employees.

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COMPUTER-BASED TESTING: A BRIGHT FORECAST

SMOOTH SAILING.

That might be the best way to describe the advent of computer-based testing for the GED® exam thus far. Several states have been pilot testing the use of computer-based tests, and GED administrators in three of those states say the process has gone even better than expected. Each has only one concern about CBT.

Tennessee: CBT everywhere by March 2013

“All but one of our test centers in Tennessee have expressed interest in computer-based testing (CBT),” said Susan Doherty, Tennessee’s GED administrator. “We have 35 test centers, and eight are already offering CBT. We launched three sites in March within each of our three grand divisions.

“My goal is to have the computer-based option everywhere by March of 2013 so we are ready. I anticipate a huge number of examinees as we sunset the 2002 series. The test centers are going to be ready.”

For those already taking the test via computer, the response has been encouraging, according to Doherty.

“People who are taking it on computer love it,” the administrator said. “They finish so much faster. They usually finish in four to four-and-one-half hours on the computer.”

As might be expected, most of those test takers are

under age 40.

“In 2011, in Tennessee 81.7 percent of all people who earned a credential last year were under 35,” she said. “If you go up to age 39, 88.9 percent of all people in 2011 who successfully earned a credential in Tennessee were under 40. If you look at 40-59 year-olds, only 12.6 percent took the test in Tennessee. That is a very small group.”

Perhaps that’s why use of a computer is not intimidating.

“This is a generation comfortable with computers,” Doherty observes.

And even for those who are not as comfortable, the change is “overdue” according to the educator.

“Tell me a job where you get a living wage and don’t have to have to have some level of computer literacy,” Doherty challenges. “We need to give adult learners as many skills as we can to make them competitive. The old jobs lost in the recession are not coming back. They were not efficient. Now we have a whole bunch of new jobs. People have to have the skills to get new jobs. You don’t train people for work environments that no longer exist.

“You either embrace change or fight it. Fighting it doesn’t work. People move forward. We can’t look back.

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What will be different about the new GED® test?

CHANGE IS COMING to the GED® exam, which means new ways of thinking for educators and learners alike. That’s why KET’s Amanda Dawahare created the comparison chart on the following pullout section to highlight the differences in the current and future test.

“The chart compiles highlights of information from assessment guides, from conferences, and from direct correspondence with GED Testing Service®,” says Dawahare. “We’re hoping that by looking over the comparison chart, teachers will discover which areas they need to investigate further and how to find the extended information.”

Dawahare says there are several points of comparison that bear mention:

- computer-based testing
- writing to use evidence from texts to support ideas
- an on-screen calculator
- an increase in required computer skills
- content based on Common Core Standards

Post the following pullout section on your classroom wall for quick reference.

Two great new resource collections

THE GED® OUTREACH TOOLKIT

The GED® Outreach Toolkit, at ketadultlearning.org/outreach, is full of resources to help you get the word out to learners and make a smooth transition to the new test, including:

- **2002/2014 GED® Test Comparison** (pdf). This quick-reference chart highlights major changes to the test and tells where to find more information about each topic.
- **23 Ways to Prepare for the GED® Test Transition**, with advice from GED® state administrators who have been through the transition before.

2014 GED® TEST INFO

2014 GED® Test Info, at pd.ket.org/2014testinfo, provides lots of resources for GED® teachers, including an assessment guide, item samplers, a brief explanation of the Depth of Knowledge model. Sign in as a guest to access all the resources, including this crosswalk:

2014 GED® Test and GED Connection Crosswalk (pdf). For 2014, GEDTS has reorganized content for each subject area as it relates to the Common Core State Standards. This crosswalk identifies the **GED Connection** chapters/programs that cover the new assessment targets.

KET 2002/2014 GED® TEST COMPARISON

This chart compiles highlights of information found in assessment guides, from conferences, and from direct correspondence with GED Testing Service®. The chart is intended to help teachers discover which areas they need to investigate further and how to find more information.

Page numbers, unless otherwise noted, are from the *GED Testing Service Assessment Guide for Educators*, available at www.gedtesting.com/educators/the-new-assessment-downloads.

GENERAL TEST DIFFERENCES

2002	2014	PG. NO.
<p>Item types: multiple-choice, essay, and grid format questions</p>	<p>Item types: hot spot, drag-and-drop, short answer, extended response, fill-in-the-blank, multiple choice, cloze</p>	1.3 – 1.5
<p>Assessment is informed by Bloom's Taxonomy.</p>	<p>Assessment is informed by Webb's Depth of Knowledge model and the Common Core State Standards.</p>	2.1
<p>Test is administered using paper and pencil.</p>	<p>Test is computer-based.</p>	1.3
<p>\$60</p>	<p>\$120</p>	GEDTS Pricing Memo
<p>Multiple choice items have five answer options.</p>	<p>Multiple choice items have four answer options.</p>	1.4
<p>Test-takers are allowed to use scratch paper.</p>	<p>Test-takers will be given a small dry-erase board with Expo markers.</p>	2012 GED Conference
<p>A Spanish language version of the test is currently available.</p>	<p>There will be an operational release of the Spanish version of the test sometime in 2014.</p>	2012 GED Conference

READING AND WRITING/REASONING THROUGH LANGUAGE ARTS

2002	2014	PG. NO.
<p>There is a reading test and a writing test.</p>	<p>There is a reading comprehension component and a writing component to the Reasoning through Language Arts test.</p>	2.1.1, 2.15
<p>Combined, the reading and writing tests include 90 multiple-choice questions and one essay and takes around 3 hours to complete.</p>	<p>The number of questions on the Reasoning through Language Arts test will vary. It takes around 3 hours to complete. Test-takers will be given a 10-minute break.</p>	2012 GED Conference
<p>READING: Each passage contains between 200 and 400 words.</p>	<p>Passages in the reading comprehension section will contain between 450 and 900 words.</p>	2.10
<p>READING: 75% of texts are literary – poetry, drama, prose.</p>	<p>75% of texts are informational – nonfiction and workplace contexts.</p>	2.9
<p>READING: The test includes poetry.</p>	<p>The test does not include poetry.</p>	2.12-2.14
<p>WRITING: Writing is scored based on these traits: focused main points; clear organization; specific development of ideas; sentence structure control, punctuation, grammar, word choice, and spelling.</p>	<p>Writing is scored based on these traits: analysis of arguments and use of evidence; development of ideas and structure; clarity and command of standard English conventions, grammar, usage, capitalization and punctuation.</p>	2.15
<p>WRITING: Test-takers are required to write an essay about a familiar subject.</p>	<p>Test-takers are required to draw evidence from a literary or informational text to support analysis and reflection.</p>	2.15
<p>WRITING: Essays are written on paper.</p>	<p>Test-takers must use technology to produce writing, demonstrating sufficient command of keyboarding skills.</p>	2.15
<p>WRITING: Test-takers have 45 minutes to plan, write, and edit the essay.</p>	<p>It is suggested that test-takers use 45 minutes to read a source text, compose their responses, and review/edit.</p>	1.3

SOCIAL STUDIES

2002	2014	PG. NO.
The test contains 50 multiple-choice questions . The test takes around 70 minutes to complete.	The number of questions on the Social Studies test will vary. It takes around 90 minutes to complete .	2012 GED Conference
The test contains multiple-choice questions only .	The test includes an extended response item . It is suggested that test-takers use 25 minutes to provide an analysis of primary and secondary source documents.	1.9
Questions come from the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. History—25% • World History—15% • Geography—15% • Civics and Government—25% • Economics—20% 	Extended response passages will range from 550 to 650 words.	2.48
	Questions come from the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civics and Government—50% • U.S. History—20% • Economics—15% • Geography and the World—15% 	2.37

SCIENCE

2002	2014	PG. NO.
The test includes the following content areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Science (physics and chemistry)—35% • Life Science—45% • Earth and Space Science—20% 	The test includes the following content areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life Science—40% • Physical Science—40% • Earth and Space Science—20% 	2.27
The test includes 50 multiple-choice questions and takes around 80 minutes to complete.	The number of questions on the test will vary . It takes around 75 minutes to complete . This test includes a short answer question.	2012 GED Conference

MATHEMATICS

2002	2014	PG. NO.
The test contains 50 multiple-choice questions and takes around 90 minutes to complete.	The number of questions on the test will vary . It takes around 75 minutes to complete .	2012 GED Conference
Test-takers may use the Casio fx-260 Solar Scientific calculator for one of the two sections of the exam.	Candidates will be provided a virtual, on-screen Texas Instruments TI-30XS scientific calculator and calculator reference tool to use on a portion of the items in the math test.	Item Sampler Guide pg. 22
A page of commonly used formulas is provided to the test-taker.	Test-takers can click to see a formula sheet . However, the new formula sheet does not provide the same information as the current formula sheet.	2.26

SCORING

2002	2014	PG. NO.
There are no short answer questions on the test.	Short answers are scored on a three-point scale . Each item will have its own rules for scoring. Items will initially be scored by humans. Once all items from field testing have been scored by humans, the scoring guides and exemplars will be used to train the automated scoring engine .	3.2-3.3
An essay is scored using a four-point scoring guide .	Extended response items in the Reasoning through Language Arts test will be scored on a 12-point scale . The extended response item on the Social Studies test will be scored on an eight-point scale .	3.4
The essay is scored holistically by two readers .	The extended response item will go through the automated scoring engine and then be double-checked by a human reader or readers.	2012 GED Conference

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“I hope people develop a positive attitude. The test is going to be harder, but we have to have higher skills to compete globally. I am hoping that this will be one way to prepare adult learners to do that.”

Pennsylvania: Expanding to more than 200 test centers

Michael J. Sobkowski, GED® administrator with the Bureau of Postsecondary and Adult Education in the Pennsylvania Department of Education, said they went live with CBT in March and “felt comfortable doing it” after Sobkowski attended numerous regional meetings and “did his homework to judge the use of CBT for himself.”

The biggest advantage he sees to CBT is the built-in security.

“After seeing the launch of CBT and knowing how the test operates in the pencil world, most of my concerns about the security of tests just go away.”

The CBT version is very simple, much easier to administer,” Sobkowski said. “There is less manual labor. With paper based testing, you are dealing with a booklet that has to be guarded from the time it leaves the testing service until it is returned to the testing services. This requires a lot of man hours from the testing service, examiners, proctors, administrators—inventorying, shipping, returning back, dealing with potential irregularities. With CBT the workload is greatly diminished. Security is imbedded in the software.”

Even with the advantages, Sobkowski acknowledged that there will be resistance to a new way of doing things.

“I am all for this change,” Sobkowski said. “This is going to benefit test takers and adult learners in general. I’ve been around the block a couple times.

Any change comes with issues and challenges and changing minds.

“This is a paradigm shift. We’ve been doing paper-based testing for 70 years. All of a sudden we are changing how we do things, and in some cases even jeopardizing jobs. There still are some issues. Everything is not laid out and clear cut. In many cases, there isn’t a standardized model because everyone operates a little differently. But this is the right thing to do.”

Sobkowski is focused on fielding questions and clearing up incorrect information at the testing centers and says that he is inviting the centers to volunteer to be pilot sites.

“We’re working with the GED Testing Service® to determine the best way to approach expansion from initial test centers to well over 200 sites that we have,” the administrator said. “Right now, access to the CBT can be spotty and there can be waiting lists to take the test.”

To solve those problems, Pennsylvania is increasing the number of testing facilities and increasing the number of hours they are open.

“With CBT this is very doable,” he said. “If we have a computer lab, we can be testing. My goal is to try to have all test centers that want to transition to be up and running by fall of next year.”

Mississippi: Webinars help centers prepare

Mississippi was one of the states that volunteered to pilot CBT,” said Eloise Richardson, GED® administrator. “We are piloting it in four of our GED testing centers: Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Itawamba Community College, Northeast Mississippi Community College, and Meridian Community College. All four of these are still giving the paper

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version as well.”

Richardson said they are using webinars sponsored by GEDTS and Pearson VUE to provide testing service employees with all the information they need to know about how to become a Pearson VUE GED® testing center—the first step in the CBT process.

As in Tennessee, all is going well in Mississippi so far.

“The chief examiners of the four community colleges say the candidates that have taken it on computer really do like it,” Richardson said. “Candidates feel very comfortable with using the computer and have made good scores.”

The one concern: price

“Since the paper version costs \$75 [in Mississippi] and the CBT is \$120, most of the candidates taking it on computer are WIA clients or others where their agency is

covering the cost,” Richardson says. “Two of the colleges are using some of their dropout recovery funds to help cover the cost.”

Adds Doherty: Price is a problem in getting more people to use CBT. We’re going to have to address this.

Overall, however, Doherty and the others recognize that CBT is just one more step in helping learners prepare for good jobs.

“We all know that our work is not about passing the test,” Doherty says. “GED is not the end point. It is a portal to the next station. People have to have more training. They have to have some sort of post-secondary training. Certificates and associate degrees are where job creation is. We want learners to be successful on the test but more importantly to be successful in the workplace.”¹¹

For more information, visit the GED Testing Service® website at gedtestingservice.com.

The biggest advantage Sobkowski sees to CBT is the built-in security. “After seeing the launch of CBT and knowing how the test operates in the pencil world, most of my concerns about the security of tests just go away.”

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THE SOBKOWSKI METHOD

Sobkowski has six suggestions for ushering in the CBT process:

3 Educate constituents about what **options** they have now and in the future. Be sure to emphasize if learners don't finish next year, they have to **start over** again.

5 Offer as much **flexibility** as possible for test takers. Increase the hours of operation for testing centers if possible. A computer lab does not have to be filled.

1 Believe in the concept of CBT, that this is the best way to administer GED testing now and in future.

4 Realize there is **no template**, because all states are different. Be open-minded and flexible. Lay out enough carrots for testing center personnel to see the benefits of **doing it now** as opposed to later. Invite those who have done it to field questions. Plan for follow up meetings.

2 Communicate continuously with **field people**. Many states have a couple dozen testing centers, but some have hundreds. Do you have sufficient coverage? Does it take learners hours to travel to the site and then test for hours? If so, you may need **more sites**.

6 Realize that the **role** of state administrators will be changing. It is still unclear what our involvement will be in the future.

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KET Adult Learning features innovative adult education professionals and programs; we hope you'll get some great ideas to use in your teaching!

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FACES & PLACES: Steve Oney

FOR STEVEN ONEY, school came with too much "drama." He was in and out until he finally quit at age 16.

The biggest drama of his life, however, was just around the corner, and this time it would motivate him to return to school and complete his GED® credential.

"That was the 'realest' feeling I have ever had," Oney says of finding out he was going to be a father. "I remember thinking 'this is something I have to take care of. It's not going to take care of itself.'"

At almost the same time Oney's boss told him she never would have hired him if she had known he didn't have his GED credential. He feared his

job at the library—a job he loved—might be in danger.

Fortuitously, Oney found that KET would provide the tools—videos, workbooks, an online site, even instructors—he needed to prepare for the exam through its GED Connection Program in Morehead, Kentucky.

Oney passed the exam, kept his job, and became a father to daughter, Aliyha.

"I found out that when you really, really want something, you will work hard to get it," Oney says. "In high school, I was waiting for something to drop in my lap. It never did." ⑩



*Faces & Places
features those
who make a difference
in the adult ed community.
Be inspired.*

