

Georgia High School Graduation Tests



Test Content Descriptions

Based on the Georgia Performance Standards
and the Quality Core Curriculum

English Language Arts

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Program Purpose

The Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT) measure whether Georgia high school students have mastered essential content from the state-adopted curriculum. Students earning a regular Georgia diploma must pass all four parts of the GHSGT and the Georgia High School Writing Assessment in addition to meeting other local and state graduation requirements.

The Georgia State Board of Education, in July 2004, approved the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) in English/language arts for use in all Georgia public schools. Instruction in the new language arts performance standards begins in the fall of the 2005 – 2006 school year. The 2006 and 2007 English Language Arts GHSGT will reflect the transition to the GPS from the former curriculum, the Quality Core Curriculum (QCC). First-time 11th grade test takers will take a transitional form of the English Language Arts GHSGT that is aligned to standards and content found in both the GPS and the QCC. The transitional tests assess only the standards and the content that students have an opportunity to learn whether they received instruction on the GPS or the QCC. Beginning in 2008, first-time 11th grade test takers will take an English language arts graduation test based solely on the GPS.

Committees of English language arts educators from throughout Georgia met in October and November of 2004 to identify common standards, content, and skills and make recommendations about how the information should be assessed. The revised GHSGT Content Descriptions for English Language Arts are the outcome of their discussions.

GHSGT Content Descriptions

The Content Descriptions acquaint Georgia educators, students, parents, and others with the content assessed on the GHSGT. They provide an overview of the three content domains and list the associated skills and concepts that students should understand and be able to apply. They also provide the GPS and QCC standards under which the information assessed within each domain is taught.

Georgia English Language Arts (ELA) teachers selected the standards included in the high school graduation transitional test based on (1) whether the content is essential for all graduates to demonstrate mastery of prior to graduation and (2) alignment and overlap with the QCC to ensure students who receive instruction on either curriculum have opportunities to learn the assessed information. Georgia teachers grouped the standards according to similar content themes, creating the three content domains for ELA.

- **Reading Comprehension**

It is important that students understand the meaning of what they read. Assessment in this domain focuses on student understanding of the meaning and the main ideas of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Students demonstrate comprehension by identifying main ideas as well as the evidence found in the language and elements of a text that support meaning. Students also identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the characteristics of a variety of texts as they relate to meaning. Students recognize how authors use literary elements including language and style, character development, point of view, irony, sound, form, and structure to convey meaning.

- **Literary Analysis**

It is important that students be able to analyze what they read. Assessment in this domain focuses on analyzing how authors use language for particular purposes in fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Students interpret text by identifying and analyzing techniques used by authors to produce particular effects on their audiences.

- **Conventions and Writing**

It is important that students be able to write correctly for multiple purposes. Assessment in this domain focuses on student development of vocabulary (diction) in writing, standard usage, and use of the research and writing process. Students apply knowledge of Standard American English usage and revise writing to improve its organization or appropriateness for a specific audience. Students form clear research questions and identify appropriate methods of research.

The Content Descriptions refer to both the GPS and the QCC. The GPS can be accessed at www.georgiastandards.org, and the QCC can be accessed at www.glc.k12.ga.us. Additional information about the GHSGT program can be found at www.doe.k12.ga.us.

English Language Arts

Domain: Reading Comprehension (approximately 48% of the test)

Overview of the Domain

- Students read selections from the fiction, nonfiction, and poetry genres of American Literature for meaning.
 - Students identify structure in works of these genres.
 - Students describe main ideas and themes.
 - Students identify and analyze the meaning of vocabulary in the context of text.
 - Students identify and evaluate the use of symbolism.
 - Students identify and evaluate the use of figurative language, sound, and form in works of these genres.
 - Students determine the point of view in works of fiction and nonfiction.
 - Students evaluate the development of characters in works of fiction.
 - Students identify plot in works of fiction.

Associated Concepts and Skills

Assessment of this domain focuses on the following:

- identifying, analyzing, and applying knowledge of elements and relating them to the meaning of selected passages; elements include:
 - character development
 - foreshadowing
 - irony
 - language (e.g., symbolism, imagery, figurative language)
 - point of view
 - setting and mood
- identifying, analyzing, and evaluating the use of imagery and symbolism and relating them to the meaning of the passage
- identifying, analyzing, and evaluating an author's uses of various techniques and elements of American fiction for rhetorical and aesthetic purposes
- identifying, analyzing, and evaluating the influence of traditional or classical literature on American literature
- identifying and analyzing the history of American literature's development
- identifying, analyzing, and evaluating the structures and elements of works such as:
 - diaries
 - essays
 - journals
 - speeches
- identifying, analyzing, and evaluating the logic of evidence in an author's argument
- identifying, analyzing, and evaluating the ways authors use language and style for specific purposes in nonfiction works of American literature

- identifying, analyzing, and evaluating the effects of sounds as they relate to meaning:
 - alliteration
 - assonance
 - consonance
 - end rhyme
 - internal rhyme
 - slant rhyme
- identifying, analyzing, and evaluating the effects of forms as they relate to meaning:
 - blank verse form
 - fixed ballad form
 - free verse form
 - haiku form
 - lyrical form
 - narrative poem form
 - sonnet form
- identifying, analyzing, and evaluating the effects of language as it relates to meaning:
 - allusion
 - extended metaphor
 - figurative language
 - hyperbole
 - imagery
 - irony
 - metaphor
 - paradox
 - personification
 - symbolism
 - tone

Domain: Reading Comprehension

Associated GPS – American Literature	Code to use for ItemTracker		
ELAALRL1 Fiction – elements a, b, d	ALFT1a	ALFT1b	ALFT1d
ELAALRL1 Nonfiction – element a	ALNF1a		
ELAALRL1 Poetry – element a	ALPT1ai	ALPT1aii	ALPT1aiii

Associated QCC Standards

Core Skills 5 10 11 14 20

American Literature and Composition Standards:

Reading/Literature Standards 28 29 31

Speaking/Listening Standards 38

English Language Arts

Literary Analysis (approximately 38% of the test)

Overview of the Domain

- Students analyze selections of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry in American Literature.
 - Students analyze universal themes of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry.
 - Students analyze nonfiction selections to determine the purpose and structure.
 - Students analyze the effects of the diction and imagery in fiction selections.
 - Students analyze longer selections to determine multiple themes within the text.
 - Students analyze the choices authors make in the structures and elements of nonfiction.
 - Students analyze and explain the choices made by authors in constructing arguments in nonfiction.

Associated Concepts and Skills

Assessment in this domain focuses on the following:

- identifying, analyzing, and evaluating the structures and purposes of nonfiction as they relate to meaning, including:
 - language
 - logic
 - rhetorical strategies
 - style
 - syntax
- identifying, analyzing, and evaluating fiction, nonfiction, and poetry to determine how an author’s choices affect meaning, including:
 - controlling images
 - extended metaphor
 - figurative language
 - hyperbole
 - irony
 - paradox
 - tone
 - understatement
- evaluating a selection to determine how universal themes are presented:
 - in various literary periods
 - in fiction, nonfiction, or poetry
- identifying, analyzing, and evaluating multiple themes in longer selections of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry

Domain: Literary Analysis

Associated GPS – American Literature	Code to use for ItemTracker	
ELAALRL1 Fiction – elements c, f	ALFT1c	ALFT1f
ELAALRL1 Nonfiction – elements b, c	ALNF1b	ALNF1c
ELAALRL1 Poetry – element b	ALPT1b	
ELAALRL2 – elements a, c, d	ALTM2a	
	ALTM2c	
	ALTM2d	

Associated QCC Standards

Core Skills 5 11 14 21

American Literature and Composition Standards:

Critical Thinking 26 27

Reading/Literature 28 29 30 31 32 33

Speaking/Listening 38

English Language Arts
Conventions and Writing (approximately 14% of the test)

Overview of the Domain

- Students revise selections of writing, analyze vocabulary, and utilize research strategies.
 - Students review selections for the correct use of language in sentence and paragraph structures.
 - Students review selections to determine the most appropriate revision for communicating clearly to the reader.
 - Students review selections to determine the most appropriate revision of a text for a particular audience.
 - Students identify and correctly use a variety of research strategies.

Associated Concepts and Skills

Assessment of this domain focuses on the following:

- demonstrating understanding of proper English usage, including:
 - idioms
 - cognates
 - formal language versus informal
 - literal meanings of words
 - figurative meanings of words
- determining the appropriate use of grammar, structure, diction, or syntax in sentences and paragraphs
- determining appropriate development of logic and coherence in a written piece
- evaluating written work for its appropriateness to specific audiences, specific purposes, or specific contexts (formal/informal)
- determining the most appropriate research strategy for:
 - developing appropriate research questions
 - accessing primary and secondary research material

Domain: Conventions and Writing

Associated GPS – Ninth Grade	Code to use for ItemTracker	
ELA9C1 – element a	9CGM1a	
ELA9W3 – element a	9WRS3a	
ELA9W4 – elements b, c	9WRV4b	9WRV4c
Associated GPS – American Literature		
ELAALRL5 – element a	ALVB5a	

Associated QCC Standards

Core Skills	4	6	9	15	17	19
American Literature Reading/Literature						28
American Literature Speaking/Listening						35
American Literature Writing/Usage/Grammar						40