



Social Studies

70 Minutes, 1 section of approximately 35 questions

The Social Studies test measures your understanding of the American government systems and the development of modern societies. The questions will be in multiple choice, fill-in the-blank, drop-down, drag-and-drop, and hot-spot formats. The questions will contain a combination of graphics, charts, diagrams, cartoons, photographs, and maps. You need a baseline understanding of American society and government to pass the Social Studies test.

Areas covered on the test:

- 50% of the questions cover Government and Civics: Pg. 452-462
- 20% of the questions cover US History: Pg. 438-448
- 15% of the questions cover Economics: Pg. 466-474
- 15% of the questions cover Geography: Pg. 478-490



Top things you need to know for the GED **Social Studies** Test

1. Influences of American Government: be familiar with the ways the Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights influenced the formation of American government

- Magna Carta (1215) – Guaranteed fundamental rights to individuals, such as trial by jury and due process of law.
- English Bill of Rights – Prevented potential abuses of power by the monarchy. Guaranteed an individual's rights to fair trial, to petition the government, to bear arms, and to not be subject to cruel punishment.

2. Independence: Understand the basic outline of the Articles of Confederation and Declaration of Independence

- The Declaration of Independence was written by Thomas Jefferson in 1776.
- After declaring their independence from the British empire, the American colonies adopted the Articles of Confederation.

3. Creation of the U.S. Constitution: Know the six basic principles that underlie the Constitution

- Popular Sovereignty – The people are the source of a government's authority. The government answers to the people.
- Limited Government – Government may do only what the people have directed it to do.
- Separation of Powers – Government power is divided among three equal branches of government: Legislative, Executive and Judicial.
- Checks and Balances – each branch limits the powers of the other two branches.



1. Executive branch can veto laws & has power to appoint federal judges.
2. Legislative branch has power to impeach the president and federal judges.
3. Judicial branch can review actions of the executive and legislative branches and declare their actions unconstitutional.

- Federalism – Government power is divided between national and state governments.

4. Bill of Rights: Understand the reasons for the Bill of Rights and its contents

- The first ten amendments to the US constitution, known as the bill of rights, define the rights and liberties of the nation's citizens:
 1. Freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly and petition.
 2. Right to keep and bear arms in order to maintain a well-regulated militia.
 3. Prohibits quartering soldiers.
 4. Freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures.
 5. Right to due process of law, freedom from self-incrimination and double jeopardy, protection of private property.
 6. Establishes the rights of accused persons, right to a speedy trial and the right to legal counsel.
 7. Right of trial by jury of your peers.
 8. Freedom from excessive bail and from cruel and unusual punishment.
 9. Details other minor rights of citizens.
 10. Gives rights to the people and the states.



5. Later Amendments: Know the basic topic of each subsequent Amendment to the Constitution; understand the process of amending the Constitution

- Over time social conditions changed and political ideas evolved, so additional amendments have been added. There are 27 amendments to the constitution, which address a variety of issues.
 - Ending slavery - 13th Amendment
 - Granting voting rights to people of color – 15th Amendment
 - Prohibiting alcohol - 18th Amendment
 - Granting women the right to vote - 19th Amendment
 - Legalizing alcohol - 21st Amendment

6. Elections: Know the steps in the presidential elections process and how elections are decided.

7. Supreme Court: Be familiar with landmark Supreme Court cases

- Brown v. Board of Education (1954) ends separate but equal segregation in schools.
- Gideon v. Wainwright (1963) requires the state to provide legal counsel for defendants who cannot afford attorneys.
- Roe v. Wade (1973) strikes down laws prohibiting abortion.

8. Interest Groups: Understand the function and influence of special interest groups

- Lobbyist and advocates who work to promote or change laws and public policies.



9. Revolutionary War: Know the reasons behind the war

- Taxation without representation.

10. U.S. Expansion: Know the basic ideas of the Monroe Doctrine and Manifest

Destiny; trace the westward expansion of America

- Monroe Doctrine – American foreign policy stating that America would remain neutral in European affairs, but if European nations interfered with or attempted to colonize nations in the Western Hemisphere, the U.S. would view those actions as a threat to its own security.

11. Civil War and Reconstruction: Know the reasons behind the war; be familiar with important battles; understand the effects of the war and the reconstruction effort.

- In December 1860 a special state convention of delegates voted to secede(leave) the U.S.
- President Lincoln believed the session was illegal, and the Civil War began.
- The Civil War was fought mostly in the South and lasted four years.
- In 1862, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which ordered the freeing of all slaves. The Civil War ended on April 9, 1865.

12. Industrialization: Understand how the U.S. underwent industrialization and urbanization; know the effects of those transitions.

- Industrialization is the production of goods by mechanized means (factory).



13. World Wars: know the reason behind U.S. involvement in WWI and WWII; be familiar with important battles of WWI and WWII.

- WWI 1914-1919: The war began in Europe - The U.S. entered the war in 1917.
- WWII 1939-1945: The U.S. entered the war after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941.

14. Factors of Production: The factors of production are those things necessary to produce goods and service when attempting to generate an economic profit.

- Natural Resources – land, oil, or iron, encompass all the raw materials that are utilized to produce a good or a service.
- Labor – all workers in an organization and the work they perform when generating a good or a service.
- Capital – the money that is used to generate a good or perform a service.
- Entrepreneurship – the process of identifying what good or service needs to be produced or improved upon to make a profit.

15. Markets: Understand the relationships among price, supply and demand.

- When prices are high, demand will be low because consumers will either not buy the product or will buy it from some other producer whose price is lower.
- When supply is high, prices will be low because producers will compete among themselves for consumer dollars.
- When prices are low, demand will be high because consumers will want to take advantage of the low prices.
- When supply is low, demand will be high because consumers will be willing to pay more for goods that are relatively scarce.