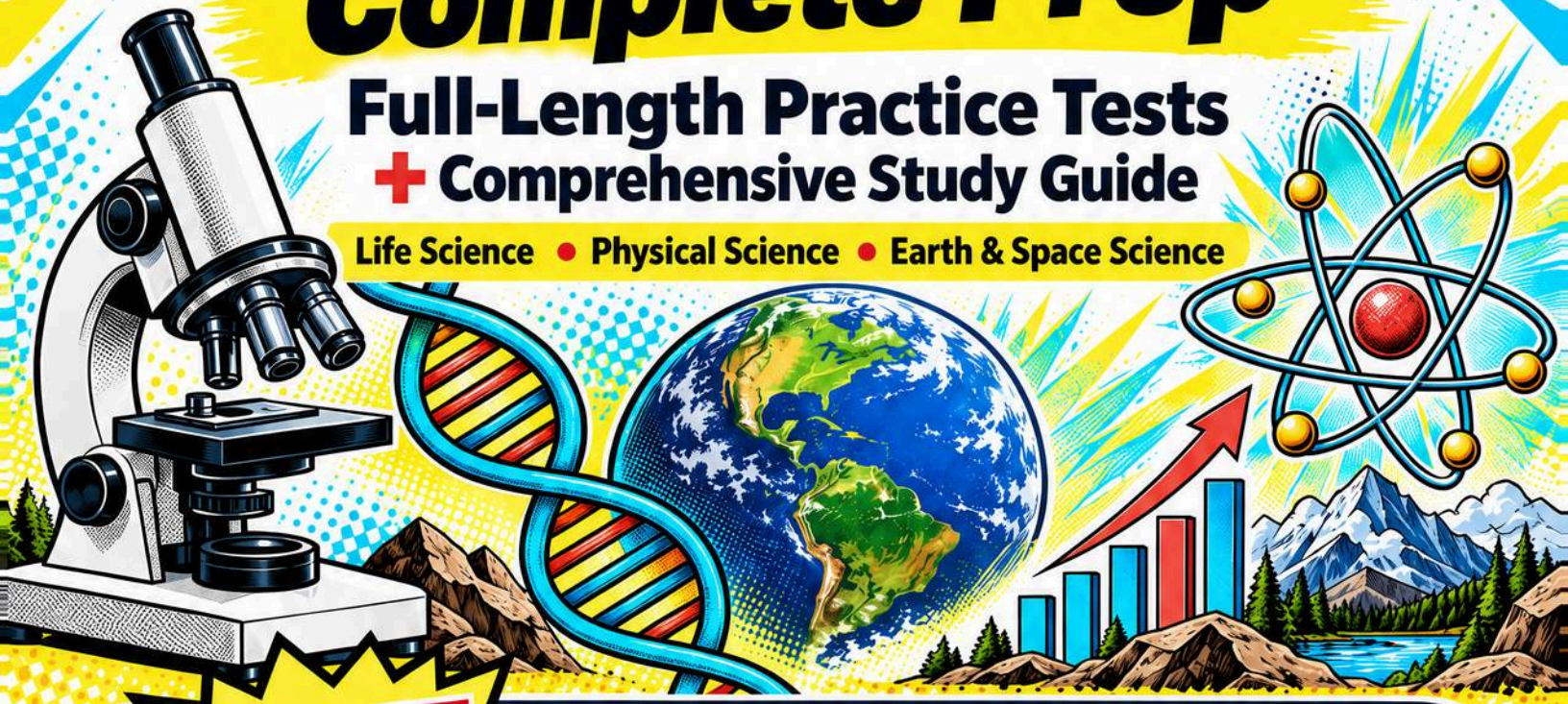
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Work the question before reading its analysis

Every chapter includes two original GED Style Questions. Cover the analysis and try each question first. Then compare your evidence or calculation with the worked solution, examine the other responses, and try the strategy on your next question. Drop-down, drag-and-drop, and hot-spot activities use written or circled responses to practice the decisions made on a computer-based test.

Chapter 1

Read the task before you read every detail

A practical routine for passages, diagrams, and shared stimuli

A long stimulus can make a short question feel harder than it is. The passage may give background, explain a procedure, define a term, and report results. The question usually asks for one specific thing. Find that target first.

Read the question stem. Underline the task in your mind: identify a variable, compare two results, choose a supported conclusion, or calculate a value. Then scan the stimulus for the useful parts. A graph title, a unit, or one sentence about how the groups were assigned may matter more than the rest of the paragraph.

Try this routine on a study about seedlings. A student places one set of bean plants near a window and another set under a lamp. The plants receive the same soil, water, and fertilizer. After two weeks, the student measures their average height. The question asks which variable was measured. You do not need to reread every detail. The word "measures" points to plant height as the outcome. Light source was changed. Water, soil, and fertilizer were held steady.

GED Style Question

Students compare the mean fresh mass of two groups of seedlings over the same two-week interval. Group A's mean mass increases from 12 g to 18 g. Group B's increases from 15 g to 19 g. How much greater is the increase in Group A's mean mass than the increase in Group B's mean mass?

(A) 2 g
(B) 4 g
(C) 6 g
(D) 1 g

Calculate each change before comparing the groups. Group A increases by $18 - 12 = 6$ g, and Group B increases by $19 - 15 = 4$ g. The difference between the increases is $6 - 4 = 2$ g, so **A** is correct. Choice B gives only Group B's increase; C gives only Group A's increase. Choice D compares the final mean masses, $19 - 18 = 1$ g, rather than the changes.

Test-taking strategy: Keep each starting mass paired with its own ending mass. Then compare the changes, not the final masses.

Separate the main point from the details

In science writing, a main idea often explains a process or a result. Supporting details may be numbers, examples, a control condition, or a description of what the researchers did. A detail can be accurate and still fail to answer the question.

Suppose a passage says that a certain bird population fell after a wetland dried. It also gives the birds' diet, nesting habits, and the dates of the survey. If the question asks which environmental condition changed, the

wetland's water level is relevant. The nesting details may explain why the water matters, but they do not answer that specific question.

A useful margin note is a short noun phrase, not a second copy of the passage: "light changed," "height measured," "group sizes unequal." These notes help when several questions refer to the same stimulus. Avoid highlighting whole paragraphs. If every sentence is marked, the marks do not help you find anything.

Use context to read unfamiliar terms

A passage may introduce a word such as *enzyme*, *salinity*, or *insulator*. Look for the job the word performs. If a paragraph says an enzyme speeds a reaction and then compares reaction times with and without it, you can answer a question about its role without knowing its full chemical structure.

Captions and labels count as evidence. So do footnotes, units, and the order of steps in a procedure. If the passage says the same amount of water was added to each container, that detail may identify a controlled variable. If a graph labels time in days, do not describe a change per hour.

A common reading slip

Do not answer from the topic alone. Seeing the word "vaccine" does not make every answer about immunity correct. Return to the study's actual comparison and result. The passage may be testing sample size, a graph trend, or a limit on the conclusion.

When a stimulus has two sources

A question may combine a paragraph with a graph, or compare two short investigations. Read each source on its own first. Write down what each one says, then compare them. If the passage says a metal rod warmed in sunlight and the graph shows its temperature over time, the paragraph explains the setup while the graph gives the measurements. Neither source replaces the other.

If the sources disagree, check their conditions before calling one wrong. They may use different populations, temperatures, time intervals, or measuring tools. A result from one town does not automatically describe an entire state. A test at 20 degrees Celsius does not tell you exactly what will happen at 80 degrees.

Read the task verb

The question's verb tells you what kind of work to do. *Identify* asks you to name something shown or described. *Compare* asks for a relationship between two or more things. *Infer* asks you to use evidence to reach a reasonable explanation. *Predict* asks what may happen if a stated condition changes. *Calculate* asks for a numerical result, and *support* asks you to connect a claim to evidence.



The task tells you which evidence to find. Background details can be correct without answering that task.

A common wrong turn is to answer a nearby question instead of the one on the screen. A passage may describe why a plant wilted, while the item asks which measurement would best test the explanation. Retelling the passage does not name the measurement. A quick paraphrase helps: "I need the measure that would tell whether the roots lack water."

GED Style Question

A field technician collects pond-water samples at two times on the same day. The measured dissolved-oxygen concentrations are shown below.

Time	Dissolved oxygen (mg/L)
6 a.m.	4
Noon	9

How much did the dissolved-oxygen concentration increase between the two measurements?

(A) 4 mg/L
(B) 9 mg/L
(C) 5 mg/L
(D) 13 mg/L

The requested quantity is the increase, not either individual reading. Subtract the earlier concentration from the later concentration: $9 - 4 = 5$ mg/L, so **C** is correct. A and B repeat the starting and ending readings. D adds readings taken at different times instead of finding their difference.

Test-taking strategy: Translate the stem into the quantity requested before calculating. An increase compares the later reading with the earlier one.

A last check for tempting choices

Wrong choices tend to use one of a few shortcuts. One repeats a true detail but does not answer the task. One swaps the groups. One uses a correct number with the wrong unit. Another makes a broad claim from a small study. You can test each option against the stimulus: point to the evidence it needs. If that evidence is missing, set the option aside.

This check is especially useful when two choices sound reasonable. The question asks for the best supported answer, not every statement that could be true in real life. Stay with the study in front of you. A familiar science fact does not replace the given evidence.

Chapter Practice

9 questions

Chapter 2: Investigations and variables

Directions: Choose one answer for each multiple-choice question. For numeric questions, write the requested value. You may use a calculator.

Answers and explanations: page 305.

1. A researcher assigns identical water filters to receive 100, 200, or 300 mL of muddy water. She records how many seconds each filter takes to drain. What is the dependent variable?

A. Volume of muddy water supplied
B. Type of filter material
C. Drainage time in seconds
D. Number of treatment groups

2. A laboratory tests whether an added nutrient increases yeast reproduction. All flasks contain the same yeast strain and sugar solution. What should the comparison flasks contain?

A. The same sugar solution without the added nutrient
B. Twice as much sugar and the added nutrient
C. A different yeast strain with the nutrient
D. No yeast and no sugar solution

3. A town studies household drinking-water use by surveying only residents leaving a garden-supply store. Which change would make the sample more representative of all town households?

A. Survey more customers at the same store.
B. Survey only customers buying lawn sprinklers.
C. Ask each customer the same question twice.
D. Randomly select households from a town-wide address list.

4. A scientist measures acidity three times from one pond-water bottle. She wants evidence of variation among locations around the pond. What should she do?

A. Measure the original bottle six more times.
B. Collect separate samples at several pond locations.
C. Use three different labels on the original bottle.
D. Average only the two closest readings.

5. A student tests whether salt affects how quickly ice melts. Salted ice sits on a warm metal tray; unsalted ice sits on a cool plastic tray. Which revision best isolates the effect of salt?

A. Use twice as much ice only in the unsalted group.
B. Warm only the salted tray further.
C. Use matching trays at the same starting temperature.
D. Compare the trays after different waiting times.

6. A thermometer placed in a calibrated 20.0°C water bath reads 22.4, 22.5, and 22.4°C. Which action addresses the main problem?

A. Calibrate or replace the thermometer before collecting new data.
B. Average more readings from the same thermometer.
C. Report only the lowest reading.
D. Round all readings to whole degrees.

7. A team will expose matching steel samples to either fresh water or salt water for seven days and measure the mass lost to corrosion. Which hypothesis can this procedure directly test?

A. Salt water is the least attractive liquid.
B. Steel samples lose more mass in salt water than in fresh water.
C. Every metal reacts with water in the same way.
D. Steel samples are more useful than plastic samples.

8. A researcher recruits 40 volunteers and uses a random-number generator to assign half to each of two treatments. What does this assignment method primarily help accomplish?

A. Guarantee that the volunteers represent the entire population.
B. Guarantee that both treatments have equal effects.
C. Reduce systematic differences between the treatment groups before treatment.
D. Eliminate the need to measure treatment outcomes.

9. Three separately prepared soil columns receive a treatment. A technician measures the drainage from each column four times. How many independent treated columns were tested? Enter a whole number.

Answer: _____

Chapter 3

Claims, evidence, and scientific explanations

Choose the conclusion the data can carry

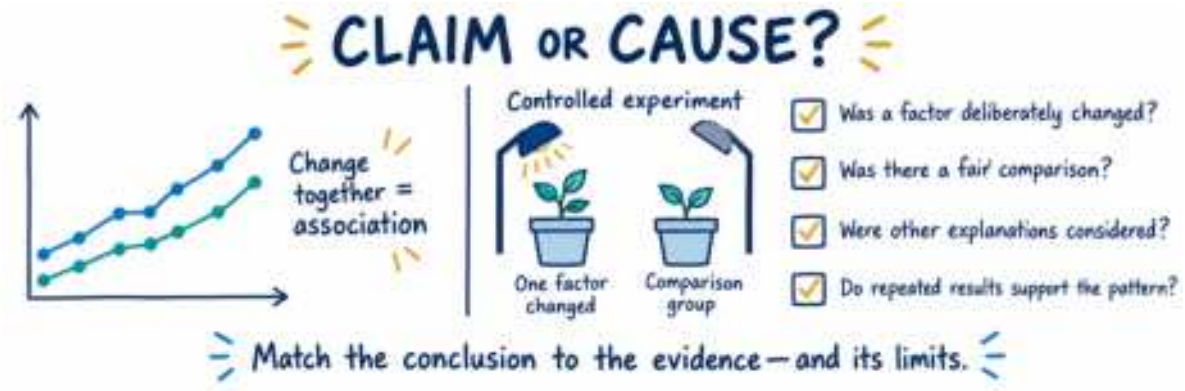
A claim is a statement someone wants the evidence to support. A result is what was observed or measured. The reasoning connects them. Many wrong answers repeat a result but turn it into a much larger claim.

Suppose a school garden tested two types of compost on tomato plants. After six weeks, plants given Compost A averaged 44 cm tall. Plants given Compost B averaged 39 cm. The evidence supports this statement: in this trial, the plants receiving Compost A grew taller on average. It does not establish that Compost A is best for every plant, every soil, or every season.

That limit is part of good science. State what the result supports, then stop where the measurements stop. A narrow conclusion can still be useful.

Association is not the same as cause

A town's asthma reports may rise during the same years that traffic increases. The two trends are associated. To claim that traffic caused the increase, researchers would need to consider other changes, such as population size, reporting rules, pollen, or access to medical care. Observational data can point to a question worth studying. They do not automatically settle it.



An experiment can provide stronger causal evidence when researchers assign treatments, use suitable comparison groups, hold conditions steady, and repeat the work. Even then, conclusions are limited to the conditions and population studied. If volunteers were all healthy adults, the results may not apply to every patient.

Scan Me

GED Style Question

Sunflowers receive the same water and soil. Over a month, both daylight hours and plant height increase. Which conclusion is best supported?

(A) Increasing daylight produced the observed height increase independently of plant age.
(B) Daylight and height increased together, but this study does not isolate the cause.
(C) Plant height decreased as daylight hours increased during the month.
(D) Increasing air temperature produced the observed height increase.

The measurements for both daylight and plant height rose, but the plants also got older as time passed. Because the study did not compare different light levels at the same time, it cannot isolate daylight as the cause. **B** stays with the observed association. A attributes the increase to daylight independently of aging without a comparison that separates them. C reverses the observed height trend. D treats an unmeasured temperature explanation as established.

Test-taking strategy: When two variables change together, look for a comparison that rules out other explanations before choosing a causal claim.

Observation, inference, and prediction

An **observation** describes something detected or measured: "the liquid turned cloudy" or "the temperature fell 4 degrees." An **inference** offers an explanation: "a solid may have formed" or "the sample lost heat to the room." A **prediction** says what may happen under a stated condition.

Questions often ask you to distinguish these statements. Look for interpretation words such as "because," "caused," or "must have." Those words may signal an inference. A number read directly from a graph is an observation, though estimating between marks still depends on the graph's scale.

Hypotheses, theories, and laws

A hypothesis is a testable explanation or prediction. A scientific theory is a broad explanation supported by many lines of evidence, such as cell theory or the theory of evolution. A scientific law describes a repeated relationship, often in mathematical form. A theory does not become a law after enough evidence. They do different jobs.

A model is a useful representation of a system. A food-web diagram shows feeding relationships. A globe models Earth's shape and rotation. Every model leaves something out. When a question asks about a model's limits, ask what it simplifies and whether that missing detail matters to the claim.

Watch for overreach

Words such as "proves," "always," and "all" make a broad claim. Check whether the study actually covered every case. One failed trial does not prove that an effect never occurs. One successful trial does not prove that it works under every condition.