

GED Knowledge & Skill Gaps

Social Studies

A Tuesdays for Teachers Webinar
by the GED Testing Service®

February 22, 2022



Before We Get Started



During the webinar, **please**

1. Keep your sound and video muted. This will limit background noise.
2. Ask questions using the chat function.
3. Keep in mind that the session is being recorded for future viewing.

Welcome



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GEDTS
Manager of Test
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Today's Focus

- What is a skills gap?
- How the gaps were identified
- Possible reasons for gaps
- Indicators, Focusing Themes, & Content Topics
- Specific examples
- Strategies to close the gaps
- Resources
- Session Q&A

What is a skills gap?

A gap is the differences between the actual performance and the expected performance.

- When student performance on a skill does not match what is expected. Such as, a straightforward skill that students seem to answer incorrectly.
- Or a common skill that is difficult but that students could answer correctly with more instruction.
- Guidance and clarification on these skills could help students improve their overall performance.

How the gaps were identified



Develop Items & Psqgs



Write
Review/Edit
Committee Review
Review/Edit
Expert Review



Field Test & Analyze



Construct
Review
Embed/Test
→ **Analyze data**
Add to bank



Build/Publish Tests



Construct
Translate
Review
Publish
Research

Possible Reasons for Gaps

- The students may need to improve their **critical thinking** and/or **reading skills**.
- The students may have specific knowledge or skill gaps that need more coverage during GED[®] test preparation.
- Students tend to perform less well on certain items simply because the concepts are difficult.

Indicators, Focusing Themes, & Content Topics

GED® Assessment Guide for Educators

- https://ged.com/wp-content/uploads/assessment_guide_for_educators_all_subjects.pdf
- (Copy and paste link as needed or search for “Assessment Guide for Educators”)
- Social studies begins on page 180.
- Social studies **Assessment Targets** (AKA "Indicators") begin on page 185.
- Social studies **Content Topics** begin on page 187.

Skill and Knowledge gaps

- Gap 1 – Identify evidence to support inferences (SSP.1.b)
- Gap 2 – Sequences of events (SSP.3.a)
- Gap 3 – Compare differing ideas (SSP.3.d)
- Gap 4 – Discrepancies between sources (SSP.8.a)
- Gap 5 – Content knowledge

Gap 1: Identify Evidence to Support Inferences (SSP.1.b)

Cite or identify specific evidence to support inferences or analyses of primary and secondary sources, attending to the precise details of explanations or descriptions of a process, event or concept.

The gap:

- Reading comprehension
- Skill deficit in identifying evidence that supports inferences
- Skill deficit in attending to precise details

Gap 1 Example #1

In 2002, President George W. Bush released a document entitled, “The National Security Strategy of the United States of America.”

00 Which statement from the document provides evidence that President Bush believed his national security strategy would require *increased* U.S. military spending?

- A. “Yet, in a very short time, we had to operate across the length and breadth of that remote nation, using every branch of the armed forces.”
- B. “We must prepare for more such deployments by developing assets such as advanced remote sensing, long-range precision strike capabilities, and transformed maneuver and expeditionary forces. . . .”
- C. “We must also transform the way the Department of Defense is run, especially in financial management and recruitment and retention.”
- D. “The United States must and will maintain the capability to defeat any attempt by an enemy—whether a state or non-state actor—to impose its will on the United States, our allies, or our friends.”

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Gap 1 Example #2

This excerpt is from a 2012 press release by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The nation's urban population increased by 12.1 percent from 2000 to 2010, outpacing the nation's overall growth rate of 9.7 percent for the same period. . . . The Census Bureau released the new list of urban areas today based on 2010 Census results.

Urban areas—defined as densely developed residential, commercial and other nonresidential areas—now account for 80.7 percent of the U.S. population, up from 79.0 percent in 2000. Although the rural population—the population in any areas outside of those classified as "urban"—grew by a modest amount from 2000 to 2010, it continued to decline as a percentage of the national population.

Based on the excerpt, which statement describes a way the population changed from 2000 to 2010?

- Immigration into the country increased the urban population.
- Migration from rural areas increased the urban population.
- The number of people living in rural areas increased.
- The number of rural communities increased.

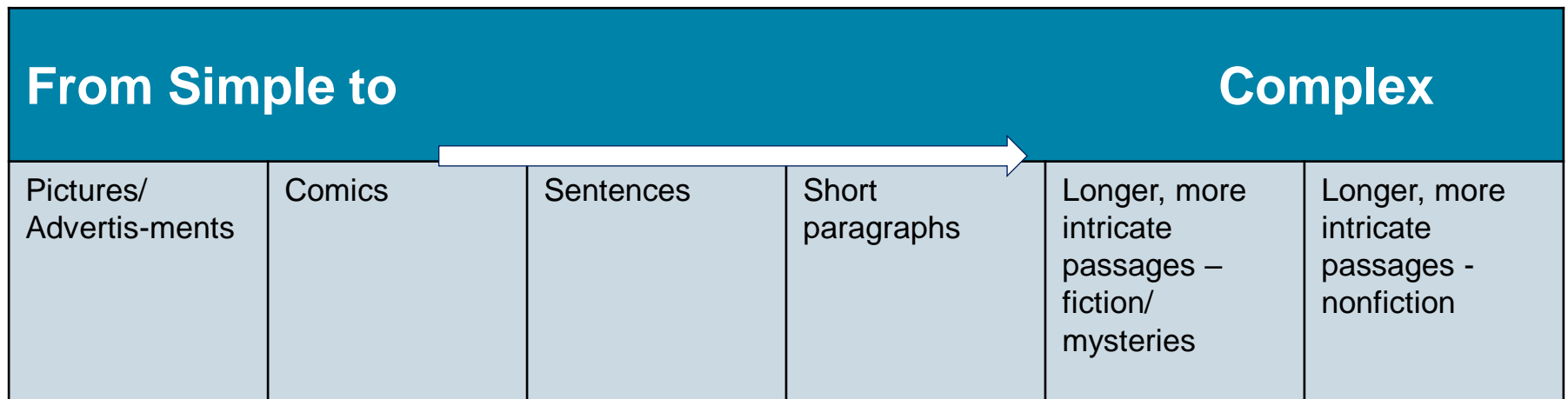
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Gap 1 Strategies

Introduce the concept of inferencing by providing simple, real-life scenarios.

A woman is standing on a podium smiling, holding a medal.

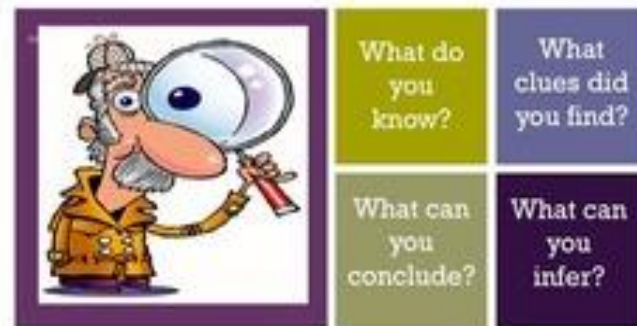
- What is going on?
- How do you know? Identify specific words and phrases that give you hints about what is happening.



How Do Effective Readers Make Inferences?

They use:

- Word/text clues
- Picture clues
- Define unknown words
- Look for emotion (feelings)
- Use what they already know
- Look for explanations for events
- ASK themselves questions!



Use Photographs

- What do you observe in this picture?
- What does it remind you of?
- What is the photographer's purpose?
- What inferences can you make based on what you see in this picture?



Caption: "Nipomo, Calif. March 1936. Migrant agricultural worker's family. Seven hungry children and their mother, aged 32. The father is a native Californian."

Reproduction Number: LC-USZ62-58355 (film copy neg.)

Note: Original negative was declared missing; original negative number was: LC-USF34-9098-C.

Use a Graphic Organizer: It Says – I Say – And So

The excerpt below is from the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Youngstown Sheet & Tube Company et al. v. Sawyer* (1952).

MR. JUSTICE BLACK delivered the opinion of the Court.

We are asked to decide whether the President was acting within his constitutional power when he issued an order directing the Secretary of Commerce to take possession of and operate most of the Nation's steel mills. . . .

The President's power, if any, to issue the order must stem either from an act of Congress or from the Constitution itself. . . .

[W]e cannot with faithfulness to our constitutional system hold that the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces has the ultimate power as such to take possession of private property in order to keep labor disputes from stopping production. This is a job for the Nation's lawmakers, not for its military authorities.

This excerpt is taken from the public domain.

Based on this excerpt, what did the court want to prevent?

Question	It Says	I Say	And So
What did the court want to prevent?	This is a job for the Nation's lawmakers, not for its military authorities.	The Constitution clearly shows a separation of power within the three branches of government with each branch having its own job to do.	The court wanted to ensure that the President (commander in chief) did not interfere with the rights of the legislative branch in doing their job.

Gap 2: Sequence of Events (SSP.3.a)

Identify the chronological structure of a historical narrative and the sequence steps in a process.

The gap:

- Reading comprehension
- Skill deficit in identifying the chronological order of events presented in a passage
- Skill deficit in social studies content knowledge

Gap 2 Example #1

The *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill

Shortly after midnight on March 24, 1989, the *Exxon Valdez* oil tanker ran aground on a reef in Prince William Sound off the coast of Alaska. The automatic pilot technology on the vessel was turned off shortly before the accident. The resulting spill of 10.8 million gallons of crude oil is one of the major environmental disasters of the twentieth century.

The captain of the *Exxon Valdez*, Joseph Hazelwood, had failed to personally direct the ship back into the proper shipping lanes after he ordered the tanker to move out of the way of icebergs. Hazelwood retired to his quarters once he gave instructions to the third mate to reposition the ship after passing the icebergs.

Neither Hazelwood nor the third mate realized how far off course the vessel was until it was too late, despite the advanced technology on the vessel. Captain Hazelwood had disembarked earlier that day to conduct business for the ship. He returned that evening to pilot the tanker out of Prince William Sound. Little did he know upon re-boarding that he would be at the center of events leading to an enormous oil spill that would impact 1,300 miles of shoreline, kill thousands of animals, and cost over two billion dollars.

00 Which event described in the passage happened *first*?

- A. The *Exxon Valdez* ran aground on a reef.
- B. The *Exxon Valdez* was taken off autopilot.
- C. Captain Hazelwood retired to his rooms for the night.
- D. Captain Hazelwood disembarked to conduct business.

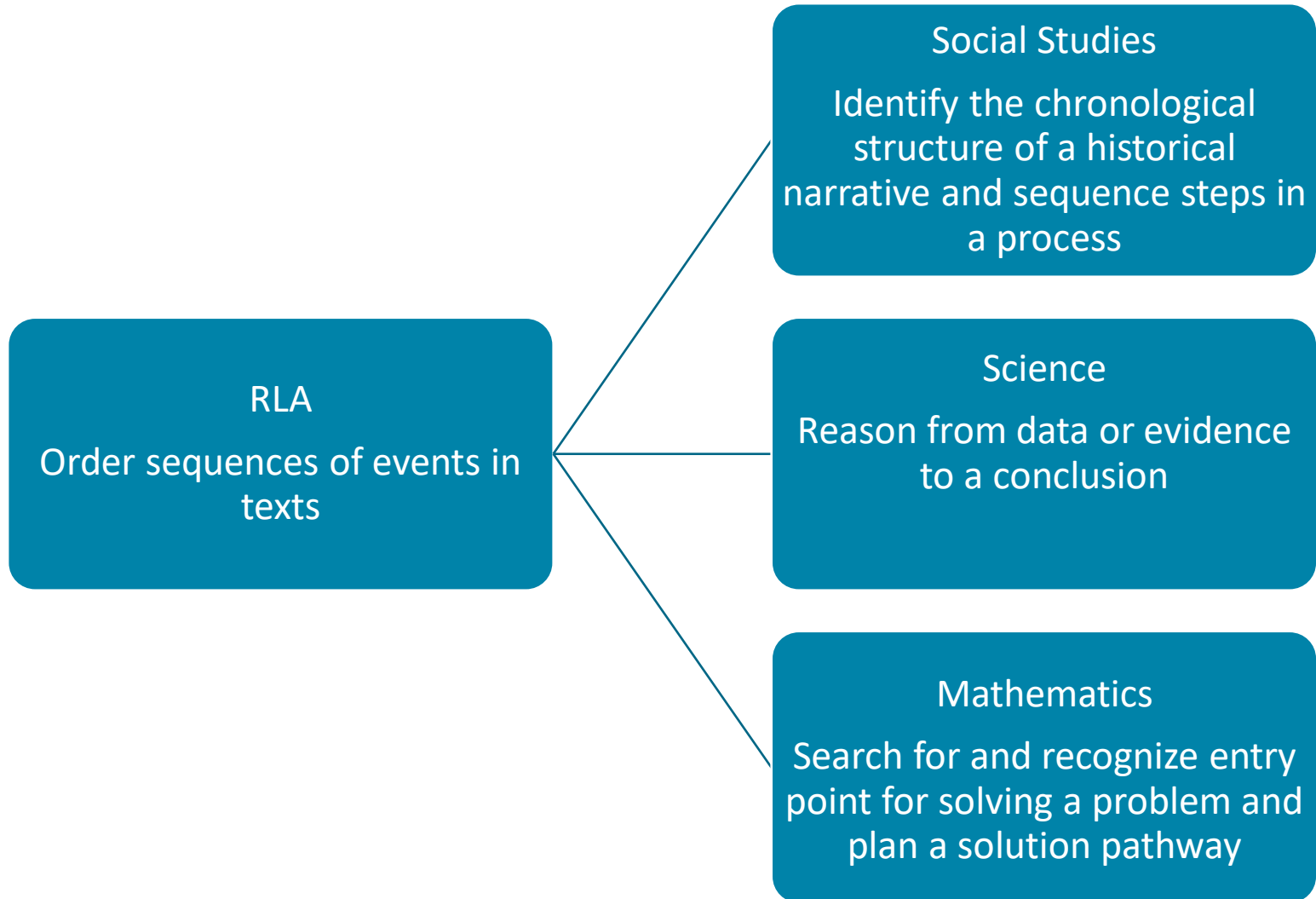
Gap 2 Example #2

Which list shows the correct order of steps in a process used by U.S. government branches to check each other?

- Congress passes a bill; the president vetoes the bill; Congress overrides the veto; the bill becomes law
- Congress passes a bill; the president vetoes the bill; the Supreme Court declares the veto unconstitutional
- the president nominates a Supreme Court justice; the Senate does not confirm the president's nominee; the Supreme Court declares the Senate's decision unconstitutional
- the president issues an executive order; the Supreme Court declares the order unconstitutional; the president vetoes the Court decision; the executive order stands

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Gap 2 Strategies



Recognizing Text Structure

- Text structure refers to how the text is organized.
- Teaching students to recognize common text structures found in expository texts can help students monitor their comprehension.
- Attempting to identify the text structure early on encourages the reader to question how subsequent sections of the text fit into the identified text structure.

Types of Text Structures

TEXT STRUCTURE

CAUSE AND EFFECT

Something causes something else to happen

Causes → **Effect** ← **Causes**

Effects ← **Cause** → **Effects**

SIGNAL WORDS OR PHRASES

because	in order to	reasons for	outcome
so	is caused by	thus	effects of
therefore	leads to	due to	impact
as a result	consequently	for this reason	influenced by
since	when/if-then	on account of	

SEQUENCE

- Steps
- Specific order

SIGNAL WORDS OR PHRASES

during	last	now	as soon as
first/second/	initially	after	prior to
third	meanwhile	at the same	step
then	directions	time	following
next	before	finally	simultaneously

PROBLEM AND SOLUTION

Problem, which is solved

SIGNAL WORDS OR PHRASES

problem	as a result of
solution	in order to
dilemma	so that
puzzle	led to
because	issue
question	advantage
answer	disadvantage
solved	
cause	
since	

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Comparing how things are the same or different

SIGNAL WORDS OR PHRASES

both	however
also	alike
too	despite
just as	in comparison
instead of	either-or
alike	yet
unlike	on the contrary
but	on the other
similarity	hand
opposite	in contrast
different from	same as
compared to	as opposed to

DESCRIPTION

Details

What is it? Category

What is it like? Property

Main Concept

What are some examples? Illustration

SIGNAL WORDS OR PHRASES

position words (beside, near, in front of, along)	make up of
such as	in fact
for instance	specifically
appears to be	characteristics
looks like	consists of
most important	for example
features	

In Social Studies . . .

When reading primary and secondary sources, students need to be able to:

- Order significant events on timelines
- Understand the connections between and among people, places, and events
- Identify cause and effect—both simple and complex

All of these require students to develop and use sequencing skills.

Gap 3: Compare Differing Ideas (SSP.3.d)

Compare differing sets of ideas related to political, historical, economic, geographic, or societal contexts; evaluate the assumptions and implications inherent in differing positions.

The gap:

- Reading comprehension
- Skill deficit in making comparisons, logical assumptions, and rational inferences.

Gap 3 Example #1

These excerpts are from a 2014 newspaper editorial by U.S. Senator John Cornyn and a 2016 veto letter by Missouri Governor Jay Nixon.

Editorial

Voter ID laws are a sensible solution to a genuine problem. The Supreme Court confirmed as much in 2008 when it upheld Indiana's voter ID law, which is very similar to the Texas law. The lead opinion in that case was written by Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens . . . , "The application of the statute to the vast majority of Indiana voters," declared Stevens, "is amply justified by the valid interest in protecting 'the integrity and reliability of the electoral process.'"

. . . So the problem is real enough, and voter ID laws strike most Americans as a reasonable solution. Opponents claim that these laws will reduce turnout, especially among black Americans, but the numbers say otherwise. . . .

Veto Letter

. . . House Bill No. 1631 purports to solve a problem which does not exist. Missouri already has strong protections in place to prevent voter fraud, and voter impersonation fraud is an extremely rare occurrence. Due to the clear and overwhelming evidence that photo ID requirements are not necessary, the [rapid spread] of these laws is widely understood to be motivated by an attempt to suppress turnout. . . . Indeed, research has shown that, when controlling for other factors, photo ID requirements have a negative effect on turnout among racial and ethnic minorities.

Voting is the foundation of our democracy. . . . Putting additional and unwarranted barriers between citizens and their ability to vote is wrong and detrimental to our system of government as a whole.

Which idea is *only* behind the editorial?

- Public approval of a law matters.
- Minority voter turnout is affected by voter ID laws.
- Elections are a vital part of the democratic process.
- Expert opinions on voter ID laws should be considered.

Gap 3 Example #2

These excerpts are from two candidates for mayor. They were asked about the role of technology in city planning.

Candidate Jolanda Peterson's Response

Advances in technology will continue to change the world around us. Occasionally, technology surprises us—just ask any parent. So, where it makes sense, we should use state-of-the-art tools. For example, high tech meters for our water and electric system would save money and resources. We can update our traffic signal system to immediately respond to changing traffic conditions. This has proven to save time and resources; and even to improve health. If technology can improve our lives, we should take advantage of it.

Candidate Emma Kypuros's Response

As technological advancement marches on, we will continue to adapt. Current problems at City Hall are already being solved in the private sector by technology. For example, the internet allows employees to work from home, saving millions of dollars. Additionally, the growth of telecommuting means there are fewer cars on the road burning and leaking fossil fuels. Technology should be used to improve city management and efficiency. We must also ensure that technology helps not just city hall or big business, but our individual citizens as well.

Which assumption is *only* behind the response of candidate Jolanda Peterson?

- Technological innovations may not deliver the expected results.
- Some technology can have a positive effect on the environment.
- Modern technology can have a positive impact on the lives of citizens.
- Some technological solutions have not been implemented by the local government.

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Gap 3 Example #3

Man in Nature

John Locke asserted that man in nature is absolutely free, in total control of self and personal property, equal to the greatest person, and ruled by no one. Locke stressed that in a state of nature, there are no laws and no legal obligation for fair conduct and good behavior.

Which statement is an implication of Locke's claim regarding man in nature?

- He has no need for partners or allies.
- He has no need for rules or government.
- He lives in fear and is in constant danger from others.
- He lives with abundance and his needs are always met.

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Gap 3 Strategies

Moving from Faulty to Logical Assumptions

Critical Questions

1. What am I taking for granted?
2. Am I assuming something I shouldn't?
3. How can I determine whether this assumption is accurate?
4. What is the author assuming?
5. How can I determine if this author's assumptions are accurate?

Example:

Christie is researching representations of gender in popular music. She decides to search Google and, within a few minutes, locates more sources that she could possibly incorporate into her final paper.

- Christie's Inference/Conclusion: *I can just use Google for my research.*

Gap 4: Discrepancies between sources (SSP.8.a)

Compare treatments of the same social studies topic in various primary and secondary sources, noting discrepancies between and among the sources.

The gap:

- Reading comprehension
- Skill deficit in contrasting and comparing sources

Gap 4 Example #1

Blog Entry

As a presidential democracy, the U.S. system of government differs from a parliamentary democracy. The U.S. president has a strong role, independent from the legislative branch, but with specified constitutional restraints that may be imposed by Congress. The executive branch controls the day-to-day operations of the federal government. As head of state, the president directs foreign policy. As commander in chief of the armed forces, the president is responsible for the nation's defense. Powers this extensive can be justified by the fact that the president is elected by the people rather than by the legislative branch, as is the case in a parliamentary system.

Letter

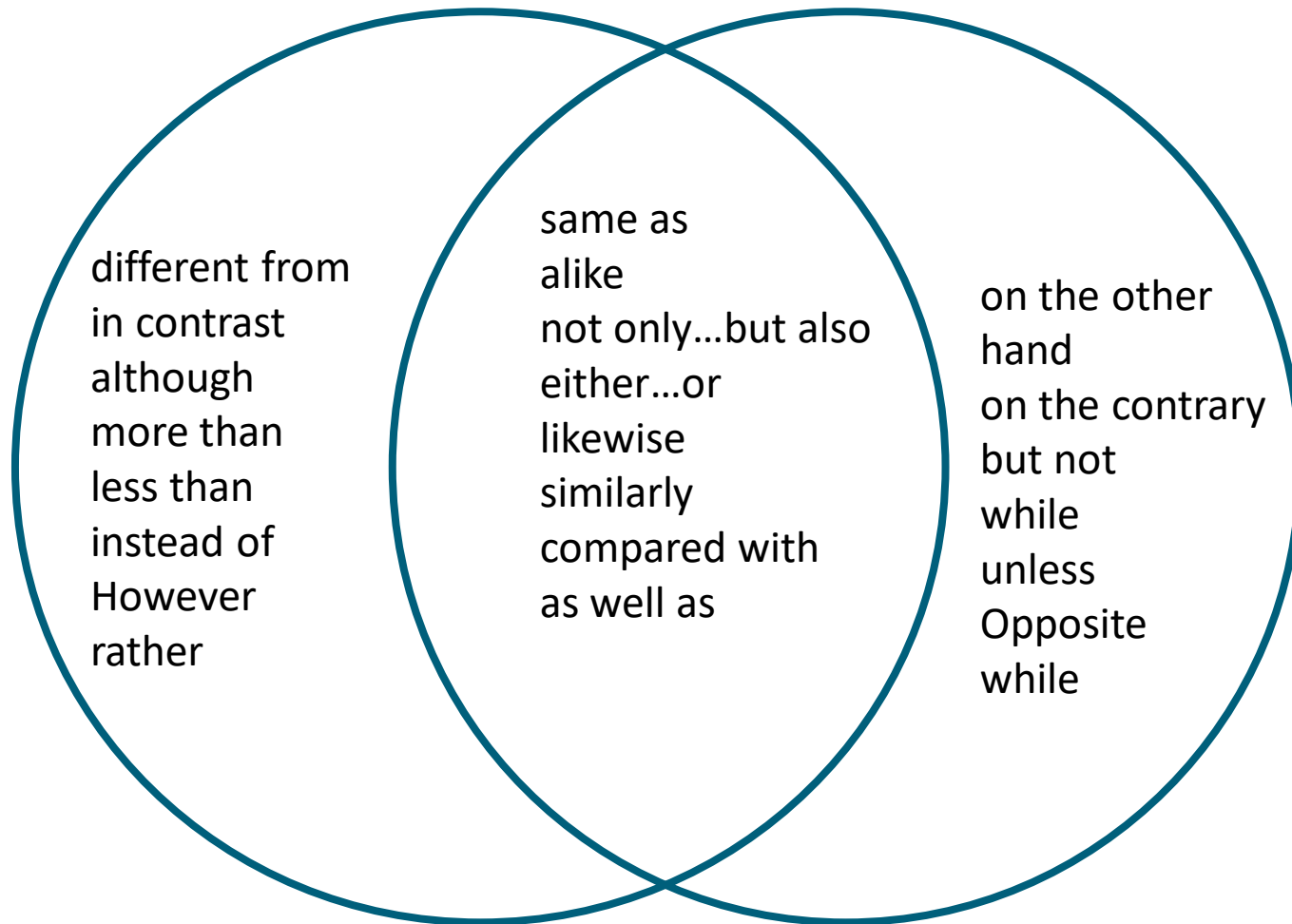
Presidential elections dominate the news every four years. While the election of a president rightly attracts much voter attention, citizens should also remember the importance of their votes for U.S. representatives and senators. One individual controls an entire branch of government, the executive. However, the powers of the chief executive are limited in various ways by the legislative branch. For example, the president must get confirmation from the Senate for judicial appointments. A president who commits crimes can be impeached by the House of Representatives. Because such checks on presidential power are vital to our democracy, voters should exercise utmost care in electing candidates for Congress.

How do the blog entry and the letter *differ* in their analyses of presidential democracy?

- A. Only the letter mentions specific powers exercised by the executive branch.
- B. Only the letter mentions the relationship between government branches.
- C. Only the blog entry recognizes the importance of presidential elections.
- D. Only the blog entry presents a defense for strong presidential powers.

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Gap 4 Strategies – Identify Signal Words to Compare and Contrast



Gap 5: Content Knowledge

Test questions assume test-takers have a basic understanding of the social studies subject matter and terminology used in the content topics and indicators.

The gap:

- Content knowledge deficits in civics/government and economics

Gap 5 Example #1

Social Studies Content Topics and Subtopics

Civics and Government	
CG.a	Types of modern and historical governments CG.a.1 Direct democracy, representative democracy, parliamentary democracy, presidential democracy, monarchy and others types of government that contributed to the development of American constitutional democracy
CG.b	Principles that have contributed to development of American constitutional democracy CG.b.1 Natural rights philosophy CG.b.2 Popular sovereignty and consent of the governed CG.b.3 Constitutionalism CG.b.4 Majority rule and minority rights CG.b.5 Checks and balances CG.b.6 Separation of powers CG.b.7 Rule of law CG.b.8 Individual rights CG.b.9 Federalism
CG.c	Structure and design of United States government CG.c.1 Structure, powers, and authority of the federal executive, judicial, and legislative branches CG.c.2 Individual governmental positions (e.g. president, speaker of the house, cabinet secretary, etc.) CG.c.3 Major powers and responsibilities of the federal and state governments CG.c.4 Shared powers CG.c.5 The amendment process CG.c.6 Governmental departments and agencies
CG.d	Individual rights and civic responsibilities

Gap 5 Example #2


Economics	
E.a	Key economic events that have shaped American government and policies
E.b	Relationship between political and economic freedoms
E.c	Fundamental Economic Concepts <ul style="list-style-type: none">E.c.1 MarketsE.c.2 IncentivesE.c.3 Monopoly and competitionE.c.4 Labor and capitalE.c.5 Opportunity costE.c.6 ProfitE.c.7 EntrepreneurshipE.c.8 Comparative advantageE.c.9 SpecializationE.c.10 ProductivityE.c.11 Interdependence
E.d	Microeconomics and Macroeconomics <ul style="list-style-type: none">E.d.1 Supply, demand and priceE.d.2 Individual choiceE.d.3 InstitutionsE.d.4 Fiscal and monetary policyE.d.5 Regulation and costs of government policies

Gap 5 Example #2

Economics	
E.a	Key economic events that have shaped American government and policies
E.b	Relationship between political and economic freedoms
E.c	Fundamental Economic Concepts E.c.1 Markets E.c.2 Incentives E.c.3 Monopoly and competition E.c.4 Labor and capital E.c.5 Opportunity cost E.c.6 Profit E.c.7 Entrepreneurship E.c.8 Comparative advantage E.c.9 Specialization E.c.10 Productivity E.c.11 Interdependence
E.d	Microeconomics and Macroeconomics E.d.1 Supply, demand and price E.d.2 Individual choice E.d.3 Institutions E.d.4 Fiscal and monetary policy E.d.5 Regulation and costs of government policies

Gap 5 Strategies – Access Online Resources

<http://www.annenbergclassroom.org>



Annenberg Guide to the Constitution

The original text is paired with an explanation of the meaning of each article and amendment, creating an excellent research tool for understanding our founding document.

[VIEW THE GUIDE](#)

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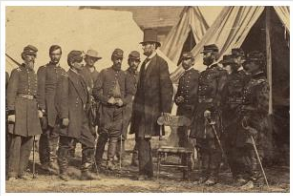
Gap 5 Strategies – Access Online Resources



Revolution and the New Nation (1754-1820s)



Expansion and Reform (1801-1861)



Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877)



The Development of the Industrial United States (1870-1900)



The Emergence of Modern America



The Great Depression and World War

<http://docsteach.org/>

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Gap 5 Strategies – Access Online Resources



<http://sheg.stanford.edu/?q=node/21>

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General Strategies

- Share the GED® indicators and content topics with your students. The content topics can be used as a teaching/study guide.
- Review key foundational concepts/content.
- Remind students to carefully read the questions and excerpts.
- Encourage students to study key definitions and terms.
- Encourage students to read more. Strong reading skills will benefit students in all 4 subject area tests.
- Encourage students to analyze the content they read on a daily basis. Strong critical thinking skills will benefit students in all 4 subject area tests.

Q & A

WHICH
HOW
WHERE
WHY
WHEN
WHY
WHERE
WHY
WHEN
WHY

about
help
who
what
when
how
which
why
where
when
why
how

answers
FAQ

Tuesdays for Teachers

12:30-2:00 PDT/3:30-5:00 EDT

February 22, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Studies
March 22, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reasoning Through Language Arts, Part One
April 26, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reasoning Through Language Arts, Part Two
May 24, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Science
Coming soon.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individual “Hot Topic Sessions” based upon Educator and Administrator interest and GEDTS observations of student and educator trends

Thank you!

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