

1 Learn the Skill

When you **compare** two or more **visual elements**, you consider the similarities between them. Details about each item are used to gain insight into the other items.

Once you have compared the items, you can **contrast** them. To contrast is to focus only on the differences. As you contrast items, you prepare yourself to analyze why the differences exist.

As with other areas of the GED® test, questions about **comparing and contrasting visuals** will test your ability to interpret information at various Depth of Knowledge levels through the use of complex reading skills and thinking skills.

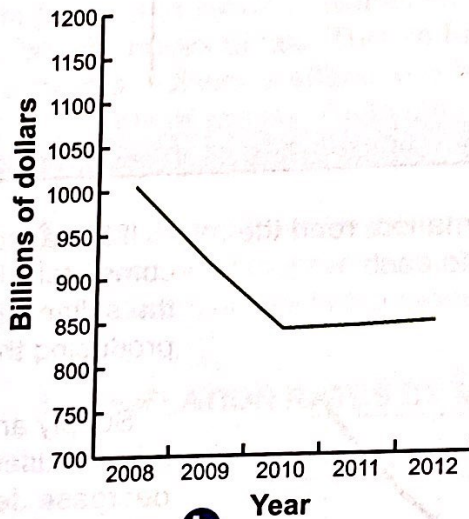
2 Practice the Skill

By practicing the skill of comparing and contrasting visuals, you will improve your study and test-taking abilities, especially as they relate to the GED® Social Studies Test. Study the visuals and the information below. Then answer the question that follows.

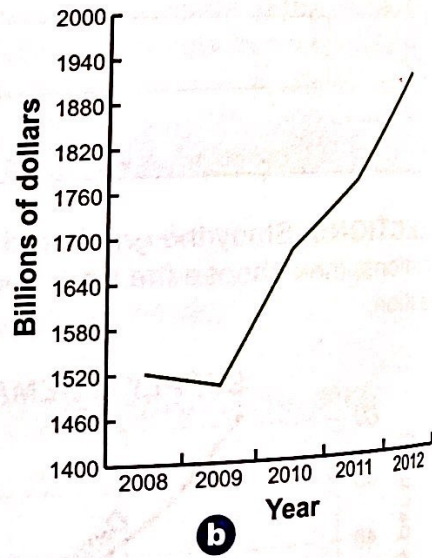
a When analyzing two visuals, look for similarities and differences. These graphs both show consumer credit—but two different types of consumer credit.

b Look for ways to connect the information in order to answer the question. In this case, study the trends beginning in 2009 and decide what they both support.

REVOLVING CONSUMER CREDIT 2008–2012 **a**



NONREVOLVING CONSUMER CREDIT 2008–2012 **b**



There are two main types of credit—revolving and nonrevolving. Revolving credit is a line of credit with a pre-approved limit, such as a credit card. As you make charges, less credit is available to you. You can pay the balance off at any time, or over time, but you also must pay finance charges on any unpaid balance.

Nonrevolving credit is a loan paid back on a schedule with interest, such as a car loan or a home loan.

1. Which of the following does the shift in each graph most likely indicate??

- A. an upswing in the economy
- B. increased fear of an economic downturn
- C. the beginning of a recession
- D. a decrease in the amount of credit available

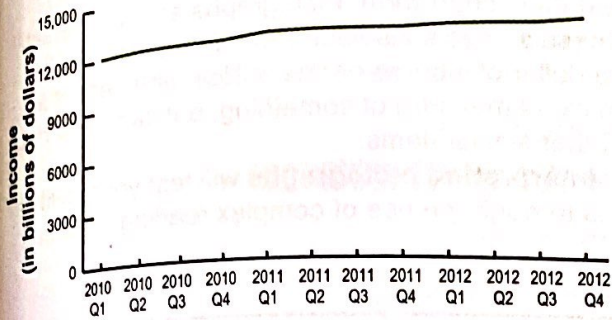
MAKING ASSUMPTIONS

You can assume that two visuals presented together on the GED® Test will have a connection. Ensure that you understand the information before trying to answer the questions.

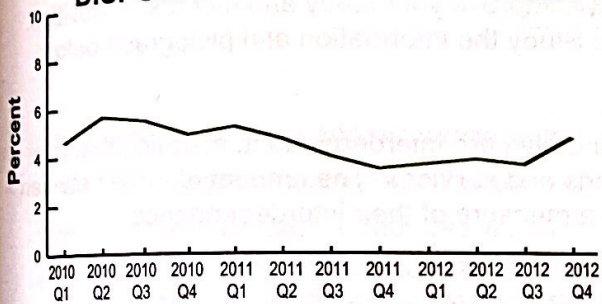
3 Apply the Skill

DIRECTIONS: Study the graphs, read the question, then choose the **best** answer.

PERSONAL INCOME



SAVINGS AS A PERCENTAGE OF DISPOSABLE PERSONAL INCOME



2. According to the graphs, there is a slow increase in income, while savings as a percentage of *disposable* income are more volatile and trending downward. Which of the following could be reasons for this trend difference?

- A. Savings are not dependent on income.
- B. People always spend whatever they make.
- C. People are paying down debt, not saving.
- D. Personal income and disposable personal income are unrelated.

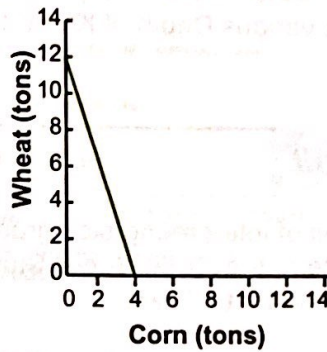
DIRECTIONS: Study the information and the graphs, read the questions, then choose the **best** answers.

Countries often specialize in goods and services depending on the resources available to them. They will most often choose to produce goods and services that provide them with a comparative advantage over other producers in a market. A country has a comparative advantage when it is better at producing a product (more efficiently and cheaply) than another country.

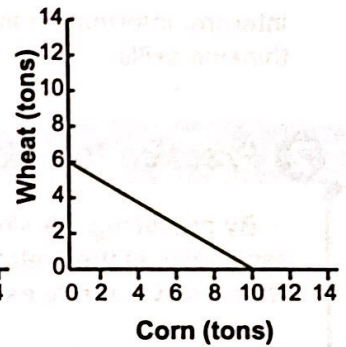
To analyze comparative advantage, compare opportunity costs. The opportunity cost of producing a good or service is the value of the next best choice. For example, if Country A is capable of producing

4 tons of wheat and 1 ton of corn, but decides to produce only wheat, the opportunity cost of producing 1 ton of wheat is 1/4 ton of corn. When using comparative advantage to determine who should produce what, a country should specialize in goods and services that have a lower opportunity cost. Opportunity cost and comparative advantage can be shown using graphs.

COUNTRY A



COUNTRY B



3. What is the opportunity cost for Country B to produce 10 tons of corn?

- A. 2 tons of wheat
- B. 4 tons of wheat
- C. 6 tons of wheat
- D. 8 tons of wheat

4. If each country specializes to the benefit of both countries, which of the following best describes what each country should produce, and why?

- A. Country A should produce corn and Country B should produce wheat because Country A has the highest opportunity cost for wheat and Country B has the highest opportunity cost for corn.
- B. Country A should produce corn and Country B should produce wheat because Country A has the lowest opportunity cost for wheat and Country B has the lowest opportunity cost for corn.
- C. Country A should produce wheat and Country B should produce corn because Country A has the highest opportunity cost for wheat and Country B has the highest opportunity cost for corn.
- D. Country A should produce wheat and Country B should produce corn because Country A has the lowest opportunity cost for wheat and Country B has the lowest opportunity cost for corn.

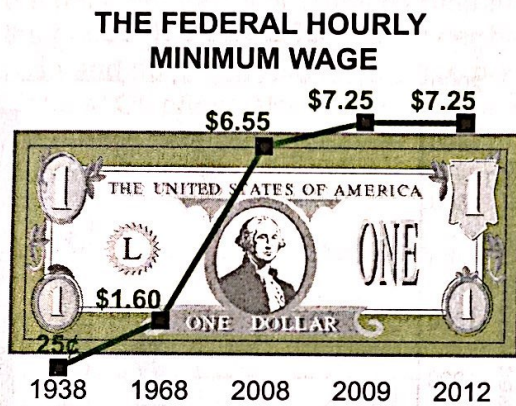
1 Review the Skill

To **compare** and **contrast** is a useful way to make connections between two or more items and the ideas they represent. To compare items is to examine the similarities and differences between them. To contrast them is to consider only the differences. Once you are familiar with their similarities and differences, you can analyze what these similarities and differences tell you about the items.

When you **compare and contrast visuals**, first take note of the things that are alike. From there, examine the things that are distinctive to each one.

2 Refine the Skill

By refining the skill of comparing and contrasting visuals, you will improve your study and test-taking abilities, especially as they relate to the GED® Social Studies Test. Study the information below. Then answer the questions that follow.



STATE	2012 BASIC MINIMUM WAGE (PER HOUR)
Georgia	\$5.15
California	\$8.00
Washington, D.C.	\$8.25
Florida	\$7.79
Massachusetts	\$8.00

a The graph displays an upward trend in the amount of the U.S. minimum wage. Keep in mind that the last three years shown cover one to three year gaps, while the first three years cover 30 and 40 year gaps.

b The table contains information that can be compared and contrasted between states (in the table) and the information presented on the graph.

1. Which of the following can you infer by comparing and contrasting information on the two visuals?

- A. Business ventures affect minimum wage.
- B. Massachusetts enacted the first minimum wage law.
- C. Georgia has a lower "cost of living" than the other states.
- D. Increasing the federal minimum wage creates new jobs.

2. In which of the following ways do the minimum wages in California and Massachusetts compare to the federal minimum wage?

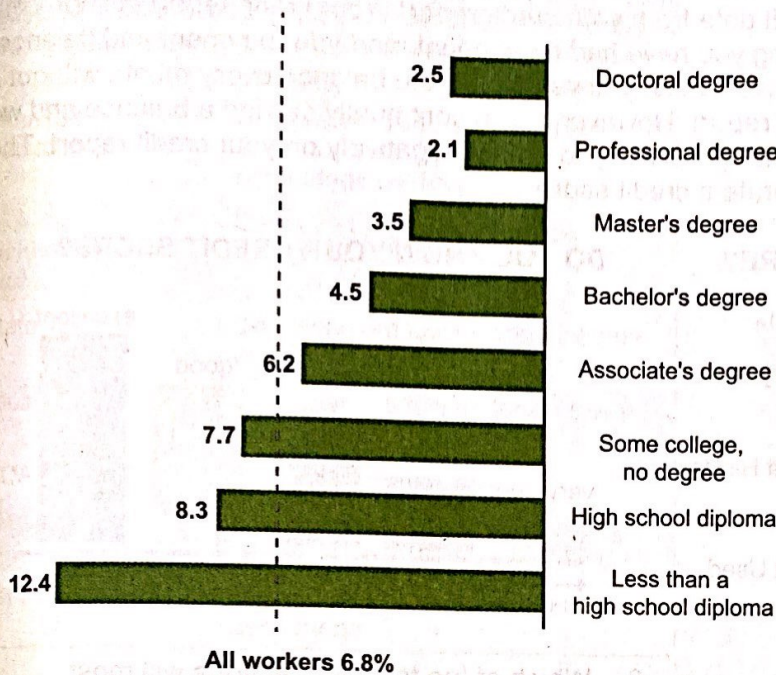
- A. Theirs are lower than the federal minimum wage.
- B. Theirs are higher than the federal minimum wage.
- C. Theirs are equal to the federal minimum wage.
- D. California's minimum wage is lower than the federal minimum wage, while Massachusetts's minimum wage is higher than the federal minimum wage.

MAKING ASSUMPTIONS

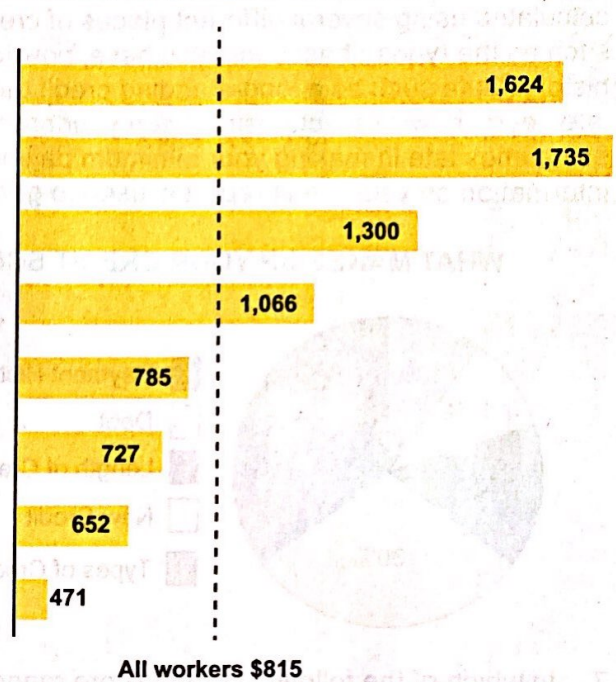
Although the federal government sets a minimum wage standard, some states may set lower standards for particular types of jobs not covered by the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act.

DIRECTIONS: Study the graphs, read the questions, then choose the best answer.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN 2012 (%)



MEDIAN WEEKLY EARNINGS IN 2012 (\$)



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey

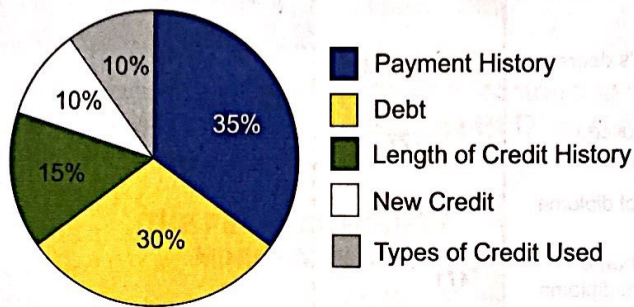
- In which of the following ways are median weekly earnings and unemployment related to each other?
 - The higher the median weekly earnings, the lower the rate of unemployment.
 - The lower the rate of unemployment, the lower the median weekly earnings.
 - The higher the median weekly earnings, the higher the rate of unemployment.
 - The higher the degree level, the lower both the unemployment rate and median weekly income.
- Based on the graphs, which of the following is most likely true of a person with a bachelor's degree (4-year degree)?
 - The person is unlikely to find a job and earn less than \$1,300 per week.
 - The person is likely to find a job and earn about \$1,700 per week.
 - The person is unlikely to find a job and will not earn more than \$750 per week.
 - The person is likely to find a job and earn about \$1,000 per week.
- Which of the following occupations would fall into both of these categories: second-lowest rate of unemployment and second-highest median weekly earnings?
 - fast-food worker
 - college professor
 - teacher
 - licensed electrician
- A woman makes the individual choice not to complete college, and instead to begin working. What can you conclude about this woman?
 - Her chances of finding a well-paying job are much better than the chances of a person with a bachelor's degree.
 - She will be unable to find a job easily where she makes a median weekly income of more than \$500.
 - She will make more money and more easily find a job than a person who has not completed high school.
 - Her income is more likely to be above average than the income of a person with a professional degree.

3 Master the Skill

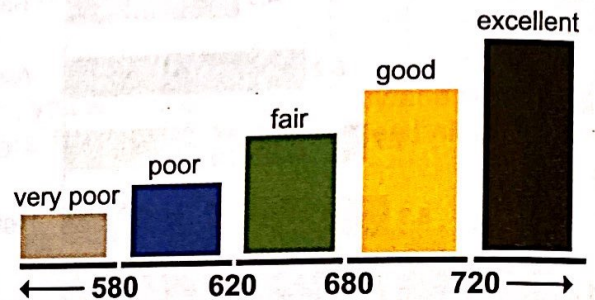
DIRECTIONS: Study the information and the graphs, read the questions, then choose the best answer.

Every adult who has any kind of financial history in the United States has a credit score. Your score is calculated using several different pieces of credit data from your credit report. Your credit report includes data such as the types of accounts you have, how long you have had an account, and your payment and balance history. Data such as a long-standing credit card for which you've paid off the balance every month without a late payment will reflect positively on your credit report. However, if you continually carried a balance and were late in making your minimum payment, this is likely to reflect negatively on your credit report. The information on your credit report is used to generate a credit score.

WHAT MAKES UP YOUR CREDIT SCORE?



DO YOU KNOW YOUR CREDIT SCORE?

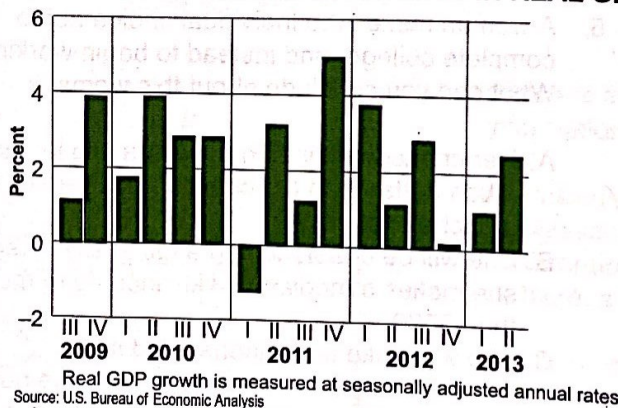


7. In which of the following credit score ranges is a person who is consistently late in making mortgage payments, credit card payments, and student loan payments, and carries a high balance on each of these, most likely to be?
- 400 to 450
 - 550 to 600
 - 700 to 750
 - 800 to 850

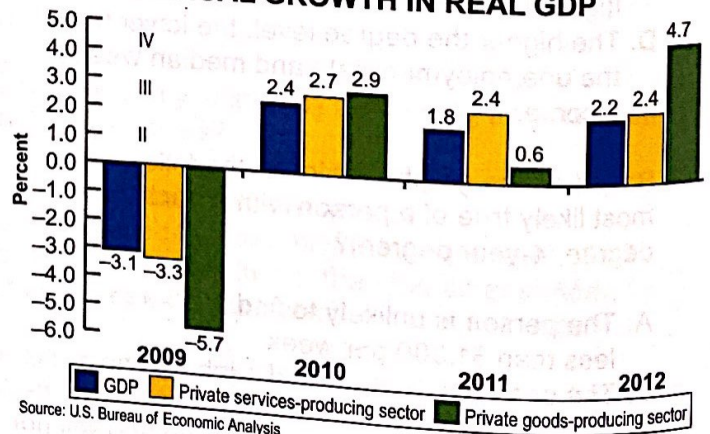
8. Which of the following actions will most significantly improve a person's credit score?
- taking out a home mortgage
 - adding a new credit card
 - taking out a new car loan
 - paying down balances on credit cards

DIRECTIONS: Compare and contrast the two graphs, read the question, and then choose the best answer.

QUARTER-TO-QUARTER GROWTH IN REAL GDP



ANNUAL GROWTH IN REAL GDP



9. Which of the following can you conclude from the two graphs?
- In 2012, goods-producing sectors declined.
 - The first half of 2009 had negative GDP growth.
 - GDP growth was strongest in 2011.
 - Q1 had the weakest GDP growth each year.

DIRECTIONS: Study the table and the pay stub, read the questions, then choose the **best** answer.

Gross Pay	Amount of Pay before Deductions
Pre-Tax Deductions	Deductions taken out before taxes. They are not themselves taxed.
After-Tax Deductions	Deductions taken out after taxes. They are taxed at the same percentage as the gross pay.
Federal Withholding Deduction	Deduction put toward federal income tax obligation
State Tax	Deduction put toward state income tax obligation
Local Tax	Deduction put toward local income tax obligation
FICA	Social Security taxes
401(k)	Voluntary deduction requested by worker to go into retirement fund
Net Pay	Amount given to worker after deductions

Gross	\$2,000.00
Federal Withholding	\$ 500.00
FICA	\$ 150.00
State	\$ 100.00
Local	\$ 24.00
Net	\$1,226.00

10. Which of the following can you infer about a 401(k)?
- 401(k) monies never come out of a person's paycheck.
 - Not everyone has 401(k) monies removed from his or her paycheck.
 - The government randomly removes 401(k) monies from an individual's paycheck.
 - 401(k) monies are part of federal withholdings.
11. Which of the following conclusions can be drawn from comparing and contrasting the tax table and the pay stub?
- Net pay is the smallest amount that will appear on your pay stub.
 - Paying federal, state, and local taxes is an individual choice.
 - The table provides information to the employee, while the pay stub provides information to the employer.
 - Gross pay is the largest amount that will appear on your pay stub.
12. Which of the following economic institutions is most closely involved with the data and information found in the table and on the pay stub?
- the World Bank Group
 - the National Bureau of Economic Research
 - the U.S. Federal Reserve
 - the Internal Revenue Service
13. The federal government may institute a stimulative fiscal policy when it wants to stimulate economic growth. Which of the following changes is the person whose pay stub is shown most likely to see if the federal government makes changes to stimulate economic growth?
- a decrease in the amount of federal withholdings
 - an increase in the amount of state taxes withheld
 - a decrease in the number of pre-tax deductions
 - a decrease in his or her gross pay