

1 Learn the Skill

Remember that when you **compare** and **contrast** texts, you look for ways in which they are similar or different. Sometimes, information in written texts can appear in **different formats**, such as tables, charts, graphs, timelines, illustrations, photographs, or maps. When you compare texts in different formats, you look for ways in which they present similar information. Ask yourself these questions: *Which format is more effective in presenting ideas? For what audience or purpose was each written? Which is easier to read?*

2 Practice the Skill

By practicing the skill of comparing and contrasting texts in different formats, you will improve your study and test-taking abilities, especially as they relate to the GED® Reasoning Through Language Arts Test. Read the passages below. Then answer the question that follows.

ABIGAIL ADAMS LETTER

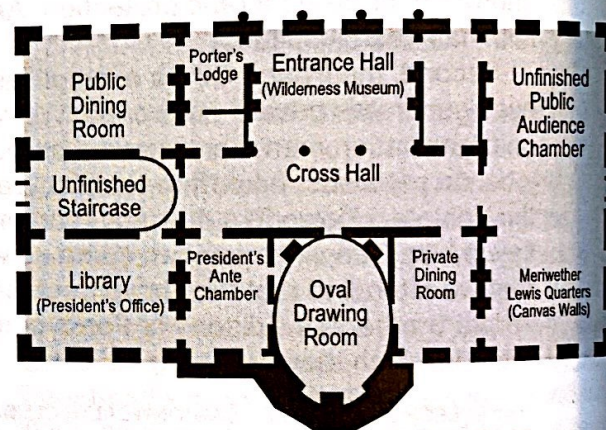
Washington, 21 November 1800

My Dear Child:

You must keep all this to yourself, and, when asked how I like it, say that I write you the situation is beautiful, which is true. The house is made habitable, but there is not a single apartment finished ... We have not the least fence, yard, or other convenience [outside], and the great unfinished audience room I made a drying room of, to hang up the clothes in. The principal stairs are not up, and will not be this winter. Six chambers are made comfortable; two are occupied by the President and Mr. Shaw; two lower rooms, one for a common parlor, and one for a levee room. Upstairs there is the oval room ... and has the crimson furniture in it. It is a very handsome room now; but, when completed, it will be beautiful.

From LETTER TO HER DAUGHTER FROM THE NEW WHITE HOUSE, by Abigail Adams, © 1800

THE WHITE HOUSE, 1803



Source: whitehousemuseum.org

- a Notice that the first text is in a letter format whereas the second is a floor plan, or diagram. Both contain some similar information.
- b The letter and floor plan give information about the White House during different administrations: those of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson.

TEST-TAKING TIPS

Base your answers on information in the passages or images. Other answer choices may be accurate, but correct answers must come from what you are asked to read or interpret, rather than from prior knowledge only.

1. Both the letter and the floor plan show that
 - A. the White House today is different from the White House in the early 1800s.
 - B. the White House was still a work in progress even after the first residents lived in it.
 - C. many years of hard work and planning went into building the White House.
 - D. building and decorating costs for the original White House were higher than expected.

DIRECTIONS: Read the passage and the timeline, read each question, and choose the **best** answer.

ROSA PARKS, ACTIVIST

- 1 Before the day Parks refused to give up her bus seat, she had spent twelve years involved with her local NAACP chapter; ... local teachers; and other members of Montgomery's African American community. The summer before, Parks had attended a ten-day training session at Tennessee's labor and civil rights organizing school, the Highlander Center, where she'd met an older generation of civil rights activists, like Septima Clark, and discussed the Supreme Court's recent decision banning "separate but equal" schools. In the process, Parks also became familiar with previous challenges to segregation: Another Montgomery bus boycott, fifty years earlier, had successfully eased some restrictions; and a bus boycott in Baton Rouge had won limited gains two years before.
- 2 In short, Parks' decision didn't come out of nowhere. ... Rather, she was part of a longstanding effort to create change, when success was far from certain and setbacks were routine. That in no way diminishes the personal courage, moral force, and historical importance of her refusal to surrender her seat. But the full story of Rosa Parks reminds us that her tremendously consequential act, along with everything that followed, depended on all the humble, frustrating work that she and others had undertaken earlier on. ...

From *SOUL OF A CITIZEN: LIVING WITH CONVICTION IN CHALLENGING TIMES* by Paul Rogat Loeb, © 2010

LIFE OF ROSA PARKS

- 1943 Parks has first run-in on segregated bus when she enters from front and walks through white section to back. Driver insists she leave bus and re-enter from back door. Joins NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People). Works to mobilize voter registration.
- 1944 Works at Maxwell Air Force Base; rides integrated trolley and is inspired by the experience.
- 1945 After three unsuccessful attempts, Parks registers to vote.
- 1949 Works at Montgomery NAACP as secretary to local president, Edgar Nixon, and later as advisor to NAACP Youth Council. Parks's husband, Raymond Parks, works to help free defendants in Scottsboro case.
- 1950 Works as part-time seamstress for liberal white couple who encourage her civil rights efforts.
- 1954 Supreme Court rules public school segregation unconstitutional. Receives scholarship to attend workshop for community leaders working on desegregation.
- 1955 Arrested on December 1 for refusing to give up seat to white passenger on segregated bus. Fined for violating segregation laws. Montgomery Improvement Association, led by Martin Luther King, Jr., formed on December 5 to protest incident. Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott begins.

2. How are the passage and timeline similar in scope?

- A. Both present a clear chronological review of Parks's life.
- B. Both highlight Parks's importance in the civil rights movement.
- C. Both provide information about Parks's activities before 1955.
- D. Both offer perspectives on the Supreme Court's 1954 decision banning segregation.

3. Which is the **most** accurate statement about the passage and the timeline?

- A. Both indicate that Parks's 1955 arrest was not an isolated incident.
- B. Both cover a specific period of 12 years.
- C. Both offer opinions about Parks's courage.
- D. Both present all of the same information but in different formats.

4. Paragraph 1 of the passage relates to the timeline by

- A. contradicting information in the first five years indicated in timeline.
- B. mentioning some civil rights activities, which appear in the timeline.
- C. summarizing important events in Parks's life.
- D. presenting opinions about events in the timeline.

1 Learn the Skill

When you **compare and contrast texts that address similar topics**, you examine all aspects of the texts to find similarities and differences. You can use basic questions to gather information about the content. For example, *What topics are addressed? How does each author approach the topics? Also, in examining the structure of the texts, you may ask How does each author organize information and ideas? What structural devices does each author use to achieve his or her purpose?*

Look for clues that show each author's **perspective**, **style**, and **tone**. As you examine the texts, understand that texts that seem similar may have big differences, and texts that seem different may have similarities.

2 Practice the Skill

By practicing the skill of comparing and contrasting texts that address similar topics, you will improve your study and test-taking abilities, especially as they relate to the GED® Reasoning Through Language Arts Test. Read the passages below. Then answer the question that follows.

INDIVIDUALISM AND THE PEACE CORPS

[T]he Peace Corps is an example of free enterprise at work. It is a working model of some of the most basic and fundamental American ideas and beliefs. First, the Peace Corps is based upon the individual—his freedom, his initiative and his responsibility. We take Americans, give them three months' intensive training and set them to work in a foreign land. They do not live in a group or in a barracks. They are sometimes alone; in a strange village. They decide how hard they will work, what projects they will undertake, where they will travel.

From SPEECH BEFORE THE COMMONWEALTH CLUB OF CALIFORNIA by R. Sargent Shriver, 1963

- a** Shriver emphasizes the importance of individualism and supports this assertion. For example, Peace Corps members often live alone, "in a strange village." His perspective is from an organizer, not a participant.

KIKUYU BINDS

The women cluck at me sympathetically and admonish the children. For all the heart I put into new tasks—building raised beds, gardening—the women know too well the ongoing struggle. Kikuyu requires vigilance. The persistent grass returns to reclaim its hold on the earth as soon as a back is turned. And these women have many babies, fields to plow, boulders to move, corn to shuck and grind into flour, houses of manure and mud to build and floors to sweep. Their heads are often down; their backs often bent.

From KIKUYU BINDS by Michele Graves, Courtesy of the Peace Corps, © 2010

- b** Graves, a Peace Corps volunteer, writes of her experience from a participant's perspective. The use of first-person pronouns can help you identify that she is writing a personal narrative to express her feelings about the topic.

USING LOGIC

When determining an author's style, look at specific words and sentences. For example, Shriver uses commonplace verbs, such as *live* and *decide*, whereas Graves uses more expressive verbs, such as *cluck* and *admonish*.

1. Which statement **best** reflects the differences in the authors' styles?
- A. Shriver uses descriptive, colorful language, but Graves uses formal, stiff language.
 - B. Shriver uses poetic language, but Graves uses straightforward language and simple sentences.
 - C. Shriver uses straightforward, simple language, but Graves uses visual details and descriptive language.
 - D. Shriver uses informal language, but Graves uses powerful, intimidating language.

DIRECTIONS: Read the remainder of the passages. Then use the drag-and-drop option to complete the chart.

INDIVIDUALISM AND THE PEACE CORPS

1 They receive enough money to live, are sent to do a job for America and are expected to do that job.

2 We operate this way because we have faith in the American individual—his skill and his dedication. We do it because we believe in personal responsibility—not in corporate anonymity or bureaucratic protection. And this faith has been justified.

3 Second, the Peace Corps exemplifies and even generates private enterprise. We have no organization men, no protected corporation jobs, no pensions, no coffee breaks. We place the Volunteer down in a new environment and say to him: See what you can come up with. And we often find that they have become the Wright Brothers or Edisons or Fords of the world in which they are living.

From SPEECH BEFORE THE COMMONWEALTH CLUB OF CALIFORNIA by R. Sargent Shriver, 1963

KIKUYU BINDS

1 Soon I croon to myself as I find a regular rhythm in my digging. I add "Lesotho Fatse La Bontat'a Rona" and "Fiela" to my repertoire. I grow tanner and, somehow, fatter, although I walk f[a]rther for groceries than I ever will in my life: an hour and a half over a mountain alongside barefooted grandmothers who carry 50-pound bags of flour on their heads. My hands crack and weather. I learn to speak the language, Sesotho, beautiful and flowing like wind through corn stalks or the rivers I cross on my travels by foot to seven villages in the valley. I explain my mission to the women in halting phrases, using the words I know. Softness. Life.

2 I mix the soil with air and cow manure and rake it into a fine mesh piled high. The raised bed sits a foot off the earth buoyed by molecules of air and moisture-retaining compost. Sifted light and fluffy as cake

flour, it provides a home for the tender long taproots of carrots, bulbous onions and the fragile roots of tomatoes. On a diet of boiled corn and cabbage, children suffer and die. A small plot of earth the size of a grave with soft soil provides space to grow foods with Vitamin A and C that prevent diseases with consequences as difficult as their names; marasmus, kwashiorkor.

From KIKUYU BINDS by Michele Graves, Courtesy of the Peace Corps, © 2010

2. Drag and drop the statements into the correct chart.

Shriver

Graves

Drag-and-Drop Answer Options
emphasizes that the Peace Corps represents American ideals and ingenuity
appeals to human sympathy
promotes the Peace Corps by providing an overview of the program
has gained knowledge and experience from the Peace Corps
appeals to American patriotism
describes the Peace Corps by providing aspects of a specific experience