

Georgia High School Graduation Tests



Test Content Descriptions
Based on the Georgia Performance Standards

Social Studies

State Superintendent of Schools

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Program Purpose

The Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHS GT) measure whether Georgia high school students have mastered essential content from the state-adopted curriculum. Students earning a regular Georgia diploma must pass all four parts of the GHS GT and the Georgia High School Writing Assessment in addition to meeting other local and state graduation requirements.

The Georgia State Board of Education approved the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) in Social Studies for use in all Georgia public schools. The newly approved Social Studies curriculum was the result of countless hours of work by many experienced professionals, including national experts, college professors, school system social studies coordinators, representatives of state curriculum associations, and classroom teachers. The original feedback received from the citizens of Georgia and professional organizations helped guide the department through the revision process. The work of the revision teams was reviewed by an expert advisory board, national social studies experts, and the State Superintendent of Schools before State Board of Education adoption. The social studies 9–12 GPS were introduced to Georgia teachers through statewide training sessions in school year 2006–2007. Student instruction in the GPS social studies began in 9–12 grade classrooms in 2007–2008, and students were responsible for the new standards on a transitional, dually aligned GHS GT in spring 2008.

This transitional test was designed by committees of Georgia educators to include concepts and skills assessed on the Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) GHS GT that were also found in the GPS. Beginning in July 2006, committees of social studies educators from throughout Georgia met to identify common standards, concepts, and skills and to make recommendations about how the information should be assessed. Classroom instruction in the new social studies performance standards began in 2007. Transitional test questions were field tested in 2007. In spring 2008 and 2009, first-time 11th grade test takers took a transitional form of the Social Studies GHS GT that was aligned to standards and content found in both the GPS and the QCC that students had an opportunity to learn regardless of the curriculum on which they were instructed.

In the spring of 2010, first-time 11th grade test takers took a social studies graduation test based solely on the current GPS. The GPS version of the Social Studies GHS GT assesses the same GPS standards that were included in the transitional Social Studies GHS GT. However, it is no longer be limited to QCC item specifications. Items are fully aligned to the GPS and reflect the depth and breadth of the curriculum. A new cut score (passing) and a new scale score were set for the GPS version of the Social Studies GHS GT and applied to the spring 2010 test.

In 2008 the State Board of Education approved revisions to the GPS as a result of the Precision Review; changes in the curriculum related the Precision Review were implemented in the 2009-2010 instructional year. In the spring of 2011, the GHS GT will include elements related to the Social Studies Precision Review. No new standards or content have been added; the additional elements focus on content already included in the test content descriptions.

GHSGT Content Descriptions

The content descriptions in this document acquaint Georgia educators, students, parents, and others with the content assessed on the GHSGT beginning in spring 2011. They provide an overview of the five content domains and list the associated skills and content that students should understand and be able to apply. They also provide the GPS standards under which the information assessed within each domain is taught.

During the transition of the Social Studies GHSGT from the QCC to the GPS, Georgia educators selected the standards included in the high school graduation test based on whether the content is essential for all graduates to demonstrate mastery prior to graduation. Georgia teachers grouped the standards according to similar content themes, creating these content domains for Social Studies.

- **American Government/Civics**

Students of American Government/Civics must understand the philosophy, functions, and structure of the United States government. Assessment of this domain focuses on the students' ability to analyze the philosophical foundations of the United States government; to describe, explain, and analyze how that philosophy developed into the structure and function of the United States government; and to describe and explain the government's relationship to the states and to its citizens. Assessment of American Government/Civics includes items that require students to interpret primary source material and charts.

- **United States History to 1865**

Students of United States History to 1865 must understand major events and themes in United States history from the seventeenth century to 1865. Assessment of this domain focuses on students' ability to describe, explain, analyze, and evaluate important events, themes, and concepts from early European settlement to the end of the Civil War. Assessment of United States History to 1865 includes items that require students to interpret primary source material, maps, graphs, and charts as well as apply geographical knowledge to very specific historical events.

- **United States History since 1865**

Students of United States History since 1865 must understand major events and themes in United States history from 1865 to the late twentieth century. Assessment of this domain focuses on students' ability to describe, explain, analyze, and evaluate important events, themes, and concepts from Reconstruction to the social change movements of the 1960s. Assessment of United States History since 1865 includes items that require students to interpret primary source material, maps, graphs, and charts as well as apply geographical knowledge to very specific historical events.

- **Geography**

Students studying history must understand geographical concepts, including the importance and impact of both physical and cultural geography on the development of regions. Assessment of this domain focuses on students' ability to describe, explain, and analyze the physical and cultural aspects of geography and to describe the interaction of physical and human systems that have shaped specific regions of the world. Assessment of Geography includes items that require students to apply informational processing skills by drawing conclusions and making generalizations about geographical concepts. Students will also be required to apply map and globe skills by drawing conclusions and making generalizations based on maps. (See the matrices on pp.15 and 16.)

- **World History**

Students of World History must understand major events and themes in world history from the Renaissance and Reformation period to the second half of the twentieth century. Assessment of this domain focuses on students' ability to describe, explain, analyze, and evaluate important events, themes, and concepts from the Italian Renaissance to developments related to globalization in the late 1900s. Assessment of World History includes items that require students to interpret primary source material, maps, graphs, and charts as well as apply geographical knowledge to very specific historical events.

These test content descriptions do not include all standards and elements of the GPS Social Studies curriculum. This document summarizes the concepts and skills that educators have agreed should be assessed on the GPS form of the GHSGT. The Content Descriptions refer to the GPS, which can be accessed at www.georgiastandards.org. Additional information about the GHSGT program can be found at www.doe.k12.ga.us.

Domain 1: *American Government/Civics* (approximately 18% of the test)

Overview of the Domain

Students describe, explain, analyze, and evaluate information related to

- the Declaration of Independence
- the United States Constitution
- the structure and function of the national government
- civil liberties and civil rights
- participation in civic life and elections

Associated Concepts and Skills:

Assessment of this domain will focus on the following:

- analyzing the philosophy and the nature of government in the Declaration of Independence
- explaining the main ideas in the debate over the ratification of the U.S. Constitution and the fundamental principles on which the document is based
- the structure and function of the national government
 - explaining the branches of the federal government
 - explaining the federal system
 - explaining the difference between the House of Representatives and the Senate, and describing the legislative process
 - analyzing the role of the President of the United States
 - explaining the functions of the cabinet
 - explaining the operation of the federal judiciary
 - describing tools used to carry out foreign policy
- explaining civil liberties and civic life, including the Bill of Rights, due process, the balance between individual liberties and the public interest, and equal treatment under the law
- describing participation in civic life
- explaining political parties and the nomination and election process, and identifying how amendments extend the right to vote

Associated GPS Standards

American Government/Civics

CG2a,b	CG3a,c	CG4a,b	CG5a,b,c,d,f	CG6a,b,d,e
CG7	CG8a,b,e	CG9	CG10a,b	CG12
CG14a	CG15b	CG16a,b,c	CG20	

Domain 2: *United States History to 1865* (approximately 26% of the test)

Overview of the Domain

Students describe, explain, analyze, and evaluate major events, concepts and themes related to

- the European settlement of North America
- the development of British North America
- the American Revolution
- the adoption and implementation of the U.S. Constitution
- territorial, population, and economic growth in the first half of the 19th century
- growing north-south divisions
- the Civil War

Associated Concepts and Skills:

Assessment of this domain will focus on the following:

- the European settlement of North America
 - describing the development of Virginia
 - describing the settlement of New England
 - explaining the development of the mid-Atlantic colonies
- the development of British North America
 - describing mercantilism and the trans-Atlantic trade
 - describing developments related to the growth of the African population
- the American Revolution
 - explaining the primary causes of the American Revolution
 - explaining ideological, military, and diplomatic aspects of the Revolution
 - explaining the origins and structure of the Declaration of Independence
- the U.S. Constitution
 - explaining specific events and key ideas related to adoption and implementation
 - explaining key features of the document
- growth in the first half of the 19th century
 - explaining the importance of the first two Presidencies and major issues faced
 - describing aspects of the Louisiana Purchase
 - explaining the reasons for and the consequences of the War of 1812
 - describing the reasons for and the importance of the Monroe Doctrine
 - explaining the impact of the cotton gin
 - describing westward growth and Manifest Destiny
 - describing reform movements and explaining women's attempts to gain suffrage
 - explaining developments related to Jacksonian Democracy
- growing north-south divisions
 - explaining the political impact of slavery and abolitionism
 - explaining the Missouri Compromise and the Compromise of 1850
 - describing the Nullification Crisis
 - describing the war with Mexico

- the Civil War: describing and explaining key events, issues, and individuals relating to its causes, course and consequences

Associated GPS Standards

United States History

USH1a,b,c
USH6b,c,e

USH2a,b

USH7a,b,c,d,e

USH3a,b,c

USH8a,b,c,d,e

USH4a,b,c,d

USH9a,c,d,e,f

USH5a,b,c,d,e

Domain 3: *United States History since 1865* (approximately 25% of the test)

Overview of the Domain

Students describe, explain, analyze, and evaluate major events, concepts and themes related to

- Reconstruction
- the growth of big business, technological innovations, and the consequences of industrial growth in the late nineteenth century
- the Progressive Era
- America's evolving relationship with the world at the turn of the twentieth century
- World War I and developments in the aftermath of the war
- the Great Depression and the New Deal
- World War II
- the Cold War
- the Civil Rights Movement and social change movements in the 1960s

Associated Concepts and Skills:

Assessment of this domain will focus on the following:

- Reconstruction: explaining legal, political and social dimensions of Reconstruction
- industrial growth
 - explaining the impact of railroads on industries and the development of the West
 - identifying the rise of trusts and monopolies
 - describing Ellis Island, the change in immigrants' origins and the impact of this change
 - identifying the American Federation of Labor and Samuel Gompers
 - describing the growth of the western population and its impact on Native Americans
- the Progressive Era: identifying, describing, and explaining major attempts to reform American society and politics
 - explaining the roles of Upton Sinclair and Ida Tarbell in reforming industry
 - describing the role of women in reform movements
 - describing Jim Crow, *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, and the origin of the NAACP
 - describing the significance of progressive reform
 - *describing the conservation movement and the development of national parks and forests, including the role of Theodore Roosevelt**
- America's evolving relationship with the world
 - explaining the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and anti-Asian immigration sentiment
 - describing the Spanish-American War and the debate over American expansionism
 - explaining U.S. involvement in Latin America (the Roosevelt Corollary and the Panama Canal)
- World War I: describing and explaining the origins and impact of U.S. involvement in the war
 - describing the move from neutrality to war
 - explaining the domestic impact of World War I

* This content will be assessed starting spring 2011.

- key developments after the war
 - describing passage of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Amendments
 - explaining the Red Scare and immigrant restriction
 - identifying Henry Ford, mass production, and the automobile
 - describing the impact of radio and the movies; and describing the origins of jazz and the Harlem Renaissance
- the Great Depression
 - describing causes
 - explaining the consequences of widespread unemployment
- the New Deal
 - describing the creation of the Tennessee Valley Authority
 - describing the Wagner Act
 - explaining the passage of the Social Security Act
- World War II
 - explaining U.S. entry and the domestic impact of the war
 - describing the development of the atomic bomb and its implications
- post World War II and the Cold War
 - describing U.S. policies after World War II
 - explaining the impact of the communist regime in China and the Korean War
 - describing the significance of the launch of Sputnik I
- the Civil Rights Movement
 - explaining the integration of the U.S. military and federal government
 - explaining *Brown v. Board of Education* and reaction to the ruling
 - describing the significance of specific writings and speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.
 - describing the causes and consequences of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Acts of 1965
- social movements of the 1960s
 - comparing and contrasting SNCC and SCLC
 - describing NOW and the modern women’s movement
 - explaining the modern environmentalist movement

Associated GPS Standards

United States History

USH10a,b,c,d,e,f	USH11a,b,c	USH12a,b,c	USH13a,b,c,d,e,f	USH14a,b,c
USH15a,b,c,d	USH16a,b,c,d	USH17a,c	USH18a,b,c	USH19b,c,d,e
USH20a,b	USH21d	USH22a,c,d,e	USH24a,b,e	

USH10f and USH13f will be assessed starting spring 2011.

Domain 4: Geography (approximately 13% of the test)

Overview of the Domain

Students describe, explain, and analyze

- the physical aspects of geography
- the cultural aspects of geography
- how the interaction of physical and human systems has shaped specific regions of the world (North Africa/Southwest Asia; South Asia, Southeastern Asia, and Eastern Asia; Europe; Latin America; and the United States)

Associated Concepts and Skills:

Assessment of this domain will focus on the following:

- physical aspects of geography
 - how physical and human characteristics are used to describe a place
 - the interaction between physical and human characteristics of a place
- cultural aspects of geography
 - how cultural characteristics are used to describe a place
 - the interaction between culture and the physical characteristics of a place
- North Africa/Southwest Asia
 - the impact of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam on the development of the region's culture
 - *the importance of geography in the development of the state of Israel**
- South Asia, Southeastern Asia, and Eastern Asia
 - *the role of geography on the U.S. containment policy and the Korean War**
- Europe
 - the importance of Europe's coastal location and river systems regarding population, economic development, and world influence
 - *the role of geography in the defeat of Napoleon**
- Latin America
 - cultural reasons why the region is known as Latin America
- the United States
 - the location of major physical features and their impact
 - *the impact of location and place on colonial settlement, transportation, and economic development**
 - reasons for the population distribution of the United States and how physical geography contributed to regional growth and development
 - *the role of geography at the Battle of Yorktown**
 - *the impact of geography on the battles of Vicksburg, Gettysburg, and Atlanta**

* This content will be assessed starting spring 2011.

Associated GPS Standards

World Geography

WG1a,b,c	WG2a,b,c,d	WG3e	WG5 (<i>USH20e</i>)*	WG6c
WG7a (WH10)	WG8a,c,d			
<i>USH1e</i>	<i>USH4d</i>	<i>WH14c</i>	<i>WH19b</i>	

Standards in italics include content that will be assessed starting spring 2011.

***Content assessed for this standard will align to USH20e.**

Domain 5: *World History* (approximately 18% of the test)

Overview of the Domain

Students describe, explain, analyze, and evaluate major events, concepts and themes related to

- the Renaissance and Reformation
- the Age of Discovery and Exploration
- the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment
- the Age of Revolution and Rebellion
- World War I
- the period between World War I and World War II
- World War II
- decolonization and the Cold War
- the late twentieth century

Associated Concepts and Skills:

Assessment of this domain will focus on the following:

- the Renaissance: explaining key developments and major figures related to the Italian Renaissance and humanism
- the Reformation
 - analyzing the Protestant Reformation
 - describing the Counter Reformation and the English Reformation
 - explaining the importance of the printing press
- the Age of Discovery and Exploration
 - explaining the role of explorers and conquistadors
 - explaining the Columbian Exchange
 - explaining the impact of improved technology
- the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment
 - explaining the contributions of major figures and the impact of their ideas on the European world view
 - identifying major ideas of the Enlightenment and their relationship to politics and society
- the Age of Revolutions and Rebellions
 - identifying causes and results of revolutions in England (1689), the United States, France, Haiti, and Latin America
 - explaining Napoleon’s rise and fall and the impact of his career
- World War I: identifying causes and explaining the global impact of the war
- the period between the world wars
 - determining the causes and result of the Russian Revolution
 - describing the rise of fascism and the nature of totalitarianism
 - explaining aggression and conflict leading to World War II

- World War II
 - describing Pearl Harbor and D-Day
 - identifying causes of the Holocaust
 - explaining Allied negotiations and policies during and following the war
- decolonization and the Cold War
 - analyzing revolutionary movements in India and China
 - describing the formation of the state of Israel
 - explaining the arms race
- the late twentieth century
 - identifying ethnic conflict and new nationalisms
 - analyzing terrorism in the twentieth century
 - describing cultural and technological integration of countries into the world economy
 - analyzing global economic and political connections
 - explaining how governments cooperate to minimize the effects of humans on the environment*

* This content will be assessed starting spring 2011.

Associated GPS Standards

World History

**WH9a,b,c,d,e,f,g
WH17b,c,e,f**

**WH10a,b,c
WH18a,b,c,d**

**WH13a,b
WH19a,b,c**

**WH14b,c
WH20a,c**

**WH16a,b,c,d
WH21a,b,c**

WH21c will be assessed starting spring 2011.

Social Studies Skills Matrices

MAP AND GLOBE SKILLS

GOAL: The student will use maps to retrieve social studies information.

I: indicates when a skill is introduced in the standards and elements as part of the content

D: indicates grade levels where the teacher must develop that skill using the appropriate content

M: indicates grade level by which student should achieve mastery, the ability to use the skill in all situations

A: indicates grade levels where students will continue to apply and improve mastered skills

Map and Globe Skills	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9–12
1. use cardinal directions	I	M	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
2. use intermediate directions		I	M	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
3. use a letter/number grid system to determine location			I	M	A	A	A	A	A	A
4. compare and contrast the categories of natural, cultural, and political features found on maps			I	M	A	A	A	A	A	A
5. use inch to inch map scale to determine distance on map			I	M	A	A	A	A	A	A
6. use map key/legend to acquire information from, historical, physical, political, resource, product and economic maps			I	D	M	A	A	A	A	A
7. use a map to explain impact of geography on historical and current events			I	D	M	A	A	A	A	A
8. draw conclusions and make generalizations based on information from maps				I	M	A	A	A	A	A
9. use latitude and longitude to determine location				I	D	D	D	M	A	A
10. use graphic scales to determine distances on a map					I	M	A	A	A	A
11. compare maps of the same place at different points in time and from different perspectives to determine changes, identify trends, and generalize about human activities					I	M	A	A	A	A
12. compare maps with data sets (charts, tables, graphs) and/or readings to draw conclusions and make generalizations					I	M	A	A	A	A

INFORMATION PROCESSING SKILLS

GOAL: The student will be able to locate, analyze, and synthesize information related to social studies topics and apply this information to solve problems/make decisions.

I: indicates when a skill is introduced in the standards and elements as part of the content

D: indicates grade levels where the teacher must develop that skill using the appropriate content

M: indicates grade level by which student should achieve mastery, the ability to use the skill in all situations

A: indicates grade levels where students will continue to apply and improve mastered skills

Information Processing Skills	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9-12
1. compare similarities and differences	I	D	M	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
2. organize items chronologically	I	D	D	M	A	A	A	A	A	A
3. identify issues and/or problems and alternative solutions	I	D	D	D	D	M	A	A	A	A
4. distinguish between fact and opinion		I	D	M	A	A	A	A	A	A
5. Identify main idea, detail, sequence of events, and cause and effect in a social studies context		I	D	D	M	A	A	A	A	A
6. identify and use primary and secondary sources		I	D	D	M	A	A	A	A	A
7. interpret timelines		I	D	D	M	A	A	A	A	A
8. identify social studies reference resources to use for a specific purpose			I	M	A	A	A	A	A	A
9. construct charts and tables			I	M	A	A	A	A	A	A
10. analyze artifacts			I	D	D	M	A	A	A	A
11. draw conclusions and make generalizations				I	M	A	A	A	A	A
12. analyze graphs and diagrams				I	D	M	A	A	A	A
13. translate dates into centuries, eras, or ages				I	D	M	A	A	A	A
14. formulate appropriate research questions					I	M	A	A	A	A
15. determine adequacy and/or relevancy of information					I	M	A	A	A	A
16. check for consistency of information					I	M	A	A	A	A
17. interpret political cartoons					I	D	D	D	M	A