



***Essential Standards* for Elementary and Middle Grades Social Studies Courses**

North Carolina Assessment Specifications Summary

NC Final Exams for 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th Grade Social Studies

Purpose of the Assessments

- NC Measures of Student Learning: North Carolina’s Final Exams for Elementary and Middle Grade Social Studies courses will measure students’ academic progress in the *Essential Standards*, adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education in June 2010.
- Final Exams scores (along with any other relevant end-of-course or end-of-grade assessment scores) will be used in the Educational Value Added Assessment System (EVAAS) to produce student growth measures to satisfy Standards 6 and 8 of the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System.
- For more information on the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System go to <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/effectiveness-model/>.
- Final Exams were developed to replace locally developed assessments, providing teachers and principals with a common measure for all students state-wide during a given testing window.
- Final Exams will not be used for school and district accountability under the READY Accountability Model or for Federal reporting purposes.

Curriculum Cycle

- 2010: North Carolina State Board of Education adoption of the *Standard Course of Study*.
- 2011–2012: Item development begins for the Common Exams and later the NC Final Exams.
- 2012–2013: Operational administration of the Common Exams.
- 2012–2013: Redesign and subsequent first operational administration of the NC Final Exams.

Standards

- The *Essential Standards* are posted at: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/acre/standards/new-standards>.

Prioritization of Standards

- The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction invited teachers to collaborate and develop recommendations for a prioritization of the standards indicating the relative importance of each standard, the anticipated instructional time, and the appropriateness of the standard for multiple-choice and constructed response item formats. Subsequently, curriculum and test development staff from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction met to review the results from the teacher panels and to develop weight distributions across the domains for each grade level.

□ Tables 1 through 5 describe the range of percentage of test questions that will appear on a given form of the NC Final Exams in 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Social Studies. All of the NC Final Exams for Grades 4 through 7 will contain only multiple choice (MC) items. In addition to multiple-choice items, the Grade 8 Social Studies NC Final Exam will include one constructed response (CR) item.

□ In order to ensure that historical thinking remains central to the test, item developers incorporated standard 2 (Tables 3-5) across as many MC and CR items as possible. The table of weights describe the percent of total score points, rather than the percent of total items.

Table 1. Test Specification Weights for the NC Final Exam for 4th Grade Social Studies

Standards	Weight Distribution
History	
H 1.1, H 1.2, H 1.3, H 1.4	14-18%
H 2.1, H 2.2	7-10%
Geography and Environmental Literacy	
G 1.1, G 1.2, G 1.3, G 1.4	14-18%
Economics and Financial Literacy	
E 1.1, E 1.2, E 1.3, E 1.4	14-18%
E 2.1, E 1.2	7-10%
Civics and Government	
C&G 1.1, C&G 1.2, C&G 1.3, C&G 1.4	14-18%
C&G 2.1, C&G 2.2, C&G 2.3	7-10%
Culture	
C 1.1, C 1.2	7-10%

Table 2. Test Specification Weights for the NC Final Exam for 5th Grade Social Studies

Standards	Weight Distribution
History	
H 1.1, H 1.2, H 1.3	9-14%
H 2.1, H 2.2, H 2.3	10-13%
Geography and Environmental Literacy	
G 1.1, G 1.2, G 1.3, G 1.4	10-13%
Economics and Financial Literacy	
E 1.1, E 1.2	8-10%
E 2.1, E 2.2	9-14%
Civics and Government	
C&G 1.1, C&G 1.2, C&G 1.3,	9-14%
C&G 2.1, C&G 2.2, C&G 2.3, C&G 2.4	14-18%
Culture	
C 1.1, C 1.2, C 1.3, C 1.4	14-18

Table 3. Test Specification Weights for the NC Final Exam for 6th Grade Social Studies

Standard 1	Standard 2	Weight Distribution
H 2.1, H 2.2, H 2.3, H 2.4	6.H.1	18-24%
G 1.1, G 1.2, G 1.3, G 1.4	6.H.1	18-24%
G 2.1, G. 2.2	6.H.1	10-12%
E 1.1, E 1.2	6.H.1	10-15%
C&G 1.1, C&G 1.2, C&G 1.3, C&G 1.4	6.H.1	18-24%
C 1.1, C 1.2, C 1.3	6.H.1	15-21%

Table 4. Test Specification Weights for the NC Final Exam for 7th Grade Social Studies

Standard 1	Standard 2	Weight Distribution
H 2.1, H 2.2, H 2.3, H 2.4	7.H.1	13% to 24%
G 1.1, G 1.2, G 1.3	7.H.1	10% to 21%
G 2.1, G 2.2	7.H.1	3% to 14%
E 1.1, E 1.2, E 1.3, E 1.4	7.H.1	13% to 24%
C&G 1.1, C&G 1.2, C&G 1.3, C&G 1.4	7.H.1	13% to 24%
C 1.1, C 1.2	7.H.1	6% to 17%

Table 5. Test Specification Weights for the NC Final Exam for 8th Grade Social Studies

Standard 1	Standard 2	Multiple Choice	Constructed Response
H 2.1, H 2.2, H 2.3	8.H.1	10% to 17%	0% to 3%
H 3.1, H 3.2, H 3.3, H 3.4	8.H.1	13% to 21%	0% to 3%
G 1.1, G 1.2, G 1.3	8.H.1	10% to 17%	0% to 3%
E 1.1, E 1.2, E 1.3	8.H.1	10% to 17%	0% to 3%
C&G 1.1, C&G 1.2, C&G 1.3, C&G 1.4	8.H.1	6% to 14%	0% to 3%
C&G 2.1, C&G 2.2, C&G 2.3	8.H.1	6% to 14%	0% to 3%
C 1.1, C 1.2, C 1.3	8.H.1	10% to 17%	0% to 3%

Cognitive Rigor

□ The items on the Common Exams in Social Studies were aligned to the Essential Standards using the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy (RBT). To learn more about RBT go to:

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/acre/standards/>.

Types of Items

- The NC Final Exams will consist of four-response-option MC items.
- Many of the items will require students to process factual content as they read, interpret, and/or analyze stimulus material, including maps, graphs, and excerpts of primary and secondary-source documents.
- Sample items, released items, and released forms are available at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/common-exams/>.

Testing Structure and Time

- The NC Final Exams in 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Grade Social Studies will contain a total of 42 MC items.
- The 8th Grade NC Final Exams will contain 39 MC items and 1 CR item. The CR item allows students to demonstrate understanding of social studies concepts by using facts to support these ideas through written expression. The answer sheet for grade 8 may be reviewed at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/common-exams/mccr.pdf>.
- Included in the total item counts are embedded field test items that will not count toward the students score but will be used for purposes of developing items for future test forms.
- Students will be given 120 minutes to answer all test questions. Students should monitor the clock to ensure they allow themselves adequate time to respond to all test questions.

Delivery Mode

- The NC Final Exams are designed for a paper/pencil delivery mode only.