



## 2015–2016 NC Final Exams of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies

### North Carolina Assessment Specifications

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#### **Purpose of the Assessments**

NC 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.

North Carolina's Final Exams for 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. The *Essential Standards* are posted at:

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

NC Final Exam 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/>.

NC State Board of Education policy GCS-A-016 directs schools to use the results from all course-specific NC Final Exams as a minimum of 20% of the student's final course grade. This requirement does not apply to end-of-year assessments in grades 3-8.

<http://sbepolicy.dpi.state.nc.us/>

NC Final Exams will not be used for school and district accountability under the READY Accountability Model or for Federal reporting purposes.

#### **Developing Assessments**

North Carolina educators were recruited and trained to write new items for the NC Final Exams. The diversity among the item writers and their knowledge of the current standards was addressed during recruitment. Trained North Carolina educators also review items and suggest improvements, if necessary. The use of North Carolina educators to develop and review items strengthens the instructional validity of the items. If a teacher is interested in training to become an item writer or reviewer for the North Carolina Testing Program, he/she can visit

[https://center.ncsu.edu/nc/x\\_courseNav/index.php?id=21](https://center.ncsu.edu/nc/x_courseNav/index.php?id=21).

For an in-depth explanation of the test development process see State Board policy GCS-A-013 or reference <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/shared/testdevprocess>.

## Curriculum and Assessment Cycle

- 2010: North Carolina State Board of Education adoption of the NC *Essential Standards*.
- 2012–13: Operational administration of the Measures of Student Learning: Common Exams.
- 2013–14: Redesign and subsequent first operational administration of the NC Final Exams.
- 2014–15: Second operational administration of the NC Final Exams.
- 2015–16: Third operational administration of the NC Final Exams.

## Prioritization of Standards

Members of the Test Development section of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) 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.

*Tables 1–3* describe percentage range of total score points that will appear on the NC Final Exam forms. All of the NC Final Exams for Grades 6 and 7 will contain only multiple-choice items. In addition to multiple-choice items, the Grade 8 Social Studies NC Final Exam will include one operational (scored) constructed response item. The multiple-choice items are worth one point each and the constructed item is worth two points. In order to ensure that the four dimensions of historical thinking remain central to the history tests, item developers incorporated Standard 1 across as many items as possible. The table of test specification weights describe the percent of total score points, rather than the percent of total items.

*Table 1. Test Specification Weights for the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies NC Final Exam*

Standard 1	Standard 2	Percent of Total Score Points
6.H.1	H 2.1, H 2.2, H 2.3, H 2.4	18-24%
6.H.1	G 1.1, G 1.2, G 1.3, G 1.4	18-24%
6.H.1	G 2.1, G 2.2	8-12%
6.H.1	E 1.1, E 1.2	10-15%
6.H.1	C&G 1.1, C&G 1.2, C&G 1.3, C&G 1.4	18-24%
6.H.1	C 1.1, C 1.2, C 1.3	15-21%
Total		100%

*Table 2. Test Specification Weights for the 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies NC Final Exam*

Standard 1	Standard 2	Percent of Total Score Points
7.H.1	H 2.1, H 2.2, H 2.3, H 2.4	13-24%
7.H.1	G 1.1, G 1.2, G 1.3	10-21%
7.H.1	G 2.1, G 2.2	3-14%
7.H.1	E 1.1, E 1.2, E 1.3, E 1.4	13-24%
7.H.1	C&G 1.1, C&G 1.2, C&G 1.3, C&G 1.4	13-24%
7.H.1	C 1.1, C 1.2	6-17%
Total		100%

*Table 3. Test Specification Weights for the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies NC Final Exam*

Standard 1	Standard 2	Percent of Total Score Points
8.H.1	H 2.1, H 2.2, H 2.3	10-17%
8.H.1	H 3.1, H 3.2, H 3.3, H 3.4	13-21%
8.H.1	G 1.1, G 1.2, G 1.3	10-17%
8.H.1	E 1.1, E 1.2, E 1.3	10-17%
8.H.1	C&G 1.1, C&G 1.2, C&G 1.3, C&G 1.4	9-17%
8.H.1	C&G 2.1, C&G 2.2, C&G 2.3	6-14%
8.H.1	C 1.1, C 1.2, C 1.3	10-17%
Total		100%

### **Cognitive Rigor**

The items on the NC Final Exams in Social Studies were aligned to the NC *Essential Standards* using the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy (RBT).

### **Types of Items and Supplementary Materials**

The NCFinal Exams in 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies will consist of four-response-option multiple-choice items.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Grade NC Final Exam will consist of four-response-option multiple-choice items and constructed response items.

The constructed response item type allows students to demonstrate their understanding of social studies concepts by using facts to support ideas through written expression. Students taking the exam on paper will write their responses on the lines provided on the answer sheet. Students must not write beyond the end of the lines or in the margins. Words written in the margins or unlined areas of the answer sheet will not be scored. Students must not add more lines to the answer sheet. Words written on extra lines will not be scored. Scorers will review student responses according to a rubric developed to the expectations outlined in the item. Students should respond in complete sentences. The answer sheet (i.e., Multiple-Choice and Constructed Response) may be reviewed at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/common-exams/answer-sheets/>. The answer sheet may be shared with students to familiarize them with the expectations.

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.

A complete list of the supplemental test materials (i.e., *NC Final Exams Materials List*) may be reviewed at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/common-exams/>.

Released items are available at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/common-exams/released-items/>. Released items may be used by school systems to help acquaint students with items. These materials must not be used for personal or financial gain.

### Testing Structure and Test Administration Time

The NC Final Exams in 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies will contain a total of 42 multiple-choice items.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Grade NC Final Exam will contain 38 multiple-choice items and two constructed response items.

Included in the total item counts are embedded multiple-choice field test items that will not count toward the students score but will be used for purposes of developing items for future test forms.

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade NC Final Exam includes two constructed response items. One constructed response item is an embedded field test item and will not be included in the student's score but will be used for purposes of developing items for future test forms. One constructed response item is operational and will be included in the student's score. The operational constructed response item is worth 2 points.

NC Final Exam 2015–16	Number of Operational Items	Number of Field Test Items*	Total Number of Items
Grade 6 Social Studies	37 multiple-choice	5 multiple-choice	42
Grade 7 Social Studies	37 multiple-choice	5 multiple-choice	42
Grade 8 Social Studies	34 multiple-choice, 1 constructed response	4 multiple-choice, 1 constructed response	40

\*Field test items 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 items.

Appendices A–C show the number of operational test items for each clarifying objective for the 2015–16 exams. Note that future coverage of objectives could vary within the constraints of the content category weights in *Tables 1–3*.

### Test Cycle and Delivery Mode

The NC Final Exams are administered to students enrolled in fall and spring courses. A list of course codes that align with the 2015–2016 NC Final Exams (i.e., *Course Codes that Align with the NC Final Exams*) is available at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/common-exams/>.

The NC Final Exams are administered through NCTest, the NCDPI's online assessment platform. Paper editions are available.

**Appendix A**  
**Grade 6 NC Final Exam 2015–16**  
**Number of Operational Items by Clarifying Objectives**

The following table shows the number of operational (scored) test items for each clarifying objective. Note that future coverage of objectives could vary within the constraints of the test specification weights in *Tables 1–3*. Some objectives not designated with tested items (i.e., “–”) may be a prerequisite objective, may be tested within the context of another objective or may be included as an embedded field test item.

Grade 6 Social Studies Clarifying Objectives	Number of Operational Items Per Objective
<b>Understand the political, economic and/or social significance of historical events, issues, individuals and cultural groups.</b>	
6.H.2.1	1
6.H.2.2	1
6.H.2.3	3
6.H.2.4	3
<b>Understand geographic factors that influenced the emergence, expansion and decline of civilizations, societies and regions (i.e. Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas) over time.</b>	
6.G.1.1	4
6.G.1.2	2
6.G.1.3	1
6.G.1.4	–
<b>Apply the tools of a geographer to understand the emergence, expansion and decline of civilizations, societies and regions.</b>	
6.G.2.1	3
6.G.2.2	–
<b>Understand how the physical environment and human interaction affected the economic activities of various civilizations, societies and regions.</b>	
6.E.1.1	1
6.E.1.2	4
<b>Understand the development of government in various civilizations, societies and regions.</b>	
6.C&G.1.1	3
6.C&G.1.2	3
6.C&G.1.3	1
6.C&G.1.4	–
<b>Explain how the behaviors and practices of individuals and groups influenced societies, civilizations and regions.</b>	
6.C.1.1	1
6.C.1.2	2
6.C.1.3	4

**Appendix B**  
**Grade 7 NC Final Exam 2015–16**  
**Number of Operational Items by Clarifying Objectives**

The following table shows the number of operational (scored) test items for each clarifying objective. Note that future coverage of objectives could vary within the constraints of the test specification weights in *Tables 1–3*. Some objectives not designated with tested items (i.e., “–”) may be a prerequisite objective, may be tested within the context of another objective or may be included as an embedded field test item.

Grade 7 Social Studies Clarifying Objectives	Number of Operational Items Per Objective
<b>Understand the implications of global interactions.</b>	
7.H.2.1	2
7.H.2.2	2
7.H.2.3	2
7.H.2.4	2
<b>Understand how geography, demographic trends, and environmental conditions shape modern societies and regions.</b>	
7.G.1.1	2
7.G.1.2	3
7.G.1.3	–
<b>Apply the tools of a geographer to understand modern societies and regions.</b>	
7.G.2.1	–
7.G.2.2	3
<b>Understand the economic activities of modern societies and regions.</b>	
7.E.1.1	3
7.E.1.2	1
7.E.1.3	2
7.E.1.4	2
<b>Understand the development of government in modern societies and regions.</b>	
7.C&G.1.1	4
7.C&G.1.2	1
7.C&G.1.3	–
7.C&G.1.4	3
<b>Understand how cultural values influence relationships between individuals, groups and political entities in modern societies and regions.</b>	
7.C.1.1	4
7.C.1.2	1

**Appendix C**  
**Grade 8 NC Final Exam 2015–16**

**Number of Operational Items by Clarifying Objectives**

The following table shows the number of operational (scored) test items for each clarifying objective. Note that future coverage of objectives could vary within the constraints of the test specification weights in *Tables 1–3*. Some objectives not designated with tested items (i.e., “–”) may be a prerequisite objective, may be tested within the context of another objective or may be included as an embedded field test item.

Grade 8 Social Studies Clarifying Objectives	Number of Operational Items Per Objective
<b>Understand the ways in which conflict, compromise and negotiation have shaped North Carolina and the United States.</b>	
8.H.2.1	1
8.H.2.2	1
8.H.2.3	2
<b>Understand the factors that contribute to change and continuity in North Carolina and the United States.</b>	
8.H.3.1	1
8.H.3.2	–
8.H.3.3	6
8.H.3.4	–
<b>Understand the geographic factors that influenced North Carolina and the United States.</b>	
8.G.1.1	1
8.G.1.2	1
8.G.1.3	2
<b>Understand the economic activities of North Carolina and the United States.</b>	
8.E.1.1	3
8.E.1.2	–
8.E.1.3	2
<b>Analyze how democratic ideals shaped government in North Carolina and the United States.</b>	
8.C&G.1.1	1
8.C&G.1.2	4
8.C&G.1.3	1
8.C&G.1.4	–
<b>Understand the role that citizen participation plays in societal change.</b>	
8.C&G.2.1	3
8.C&G.2.2	1
8.C&G.2.3	–
<b>Understand how different cultures influenced North Carolina and the United States.</b>	
8.C.1.1	3
8.C.1.2	–
8.C.1.3	2