

OVERVIEW: SOCIAL SCIENCES ASSESSMENT

The Online/OAKS Social Sciences Test is available for student in grades 5, 8 and High School. Test items are aligned to the State Board approved 2001 Social Sciences Content Standards and eligible content.

To help students meet the Social Sciences achievement standards and demonstrate what they know and can do, it is important for schools to offer:

- A comprehensive social sciences curriculum encompassing all seven strands: civics and government, economics, geography, historical skills, U.S. history, world history, and social science analysis. Introducing students to core concepts early and progressively increasing in depth will increase student understanding.
- Instruction providing all students with the opportunity to understand fundamental social sciences concepts and apply their knowledge and skills to social sciences topics and situations.

If curriculum and instruction emphasize a high level of application of social sciences knowledge and skills, students will be well prepared to demonstrate what they know on the Social Sciences Assessments.

There are two online State Tests in Social Sciences available for districts and students to access each year. A Knowledge and Skills Test is available at grades 5, 8 and High School.

This test provides a snapshot of what a student can do on a particular day with particular problems. Social science analysis offers students even more opportunity to demonstrate the depth and breadth of their social sciences knowledge as well as social science analysis abilities.

This document provides information about the Social Sciences State Test. It includes:

- An overview of the Social Sciences State Knowledge and Skills Test
- The set of general specifications that lays out requirements for general content and format
- The test blueprint, which lists item features such as the number of answer choices
- A mapping between each of the “score reporting categories,” or parts of the content standards, the grade level benchmark, the eligible content, and finally, example items that illustrate how the content will be presented in the test questions.

We hope this information is helpful to you as you develop a classroom focused on rigorous social science standards.

OVERVIEW: SOCIAL SCIENCES KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Knowledge and Skills Test questions each have a single correct answer. The online results are scored against the answer key to produce a raw score. The raw score is converted to a scale score called a Rasch unit or RIT score. Students receive a scale score based on the number of

questions answered correctly from the total number of questions issued to the student by the adaptive test engine. Students are not penalized for guessing. When students complete their test on-line, scores are reported immediately.

Social Sciences, Benchmark 2

The Social Sciences Knowledge and Skills Tests are provided in English or Spanish/English format for students in grades 5, 8, and High School.

On the Social Sciences Knowledge and Skills Test:

- Students are able to use tools commonly available to all students.
- Each State Knowledge and Skills Test item will measure only one Score Reporting Category. Each reporting category is represented by an assigned number of the items on the state knowledge and skills test.
- Each Score Reporting Category will have items available with a range of difficulty levels. This range of difficulty will be approximately the same across reporting categories.
- Test items will be in the form of questions or sentences that require completion.
- Each item will have four answer choices. Answer choices will be arranged one of three ways beneath the test item: vertically, horizontally, or in two columns (i.e., A and B in the left column, C and D in the right column).
- Test items may be worded in the negative (“Which of these is NOT. . .”), but this structure will be used rarely and only when it offers substantial advantages for the item construction.
- Neither “None of the above” nor “All of the above” will be used as an answer choice. “There is not enough information to tell” is an allowed answer choice, but infrequently used.
- Except in translated items (name to numeral, numeral to name), numbers will be expressed in numerals.
- Commas will be used in numbers with four or more digits.
- Numerical choices will be arranged in either ascending or descending order.
- Test items will be appropriate for students in the assigned grade in terms of reading level, interests, and experience.
- Test items may contain extraneous information.
- Graphic displays (stimuli) will appear above the item or to the left side of the online screen. Answer choices are presented below the question.
- Students will be told in the test directions to choose the best answer from among the choices.
- Test items will be free of age, gender, ethnic, religious or disability stereotypes or bias.
- Shading will be used on some test items. It will only be used to make a graphic’s stimulus size, shape or dimensions clear, and not solely for artistic effect.
- Color will be used on some test items. It will only be used when it helps clarify an item and will not be used for data in charts, tables or graphs.

Score Reporting Categories and Sub-Score Reporting Categories for Social Sciences Item Writing

The SRC codes are as follows:

- 1. U.S. HISTORY**
- 2. WORLD HISTORY**
- 3. CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT**
- 4. GEOGRAPHY**
- 5. ECONOMICS**
- 6. SOCIAL SCIENCE ANALYSIS**
- 7. HISTORICAL SKILLS**

The Sub-SRCs appear as follows, in order of their appearance, on this item writing document:

CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT

1. Principles of U.S. Government
2. Levels of Government
3. Separation of Powers
4. Rights of Citizens
5. Citizen Responsibility
6. Influencing Government
7. International Relations
8. Forms of Government

ECONOMICS

1. Scarcity
2. Costs and Benefits
3. Supply and Demand
4. Economic Systems
5. Governments' Role in an Economy
6. International Economics
7. Function of Money
8. Money Management

GEOGRAPHY

1. Geographical Terms
2. Geographical Representations
3. Geographical Features
4. Regions and Cultures
5. Cultural Convergence
6. Population Changes
7. Effects of Humans
8. Effects of the Physical Environment

HISTORICAL SKILLS

1. Chronological Relationships
2. Cause and Effect
3. Patterns of Change
4. Perspectives and Interpretation

U.S. HISTORY

1. Historical Influences
2. State History
3. Local History

WORLD HISTORY

1. World Development

SOCIAL SCIENCE ANALYSIS (LOCALLY ASSESSED)

1. Clarification of Topic
2. Research
3. Multiple Perspectives
4. Analysis
5. Conclusion