



TE_xES Social Studies 4-8 (118) Exam

- These slides overview information for each domain within the Social Studies 4-8 (118) Exam. This test is designed to assess whether an examinee has the requisite knowledge and skills that an entry-level educator in this field in Texas public schools must possess.



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Social Studies 4–8 Test Overview

01. Domains I–II

02. 5 hours

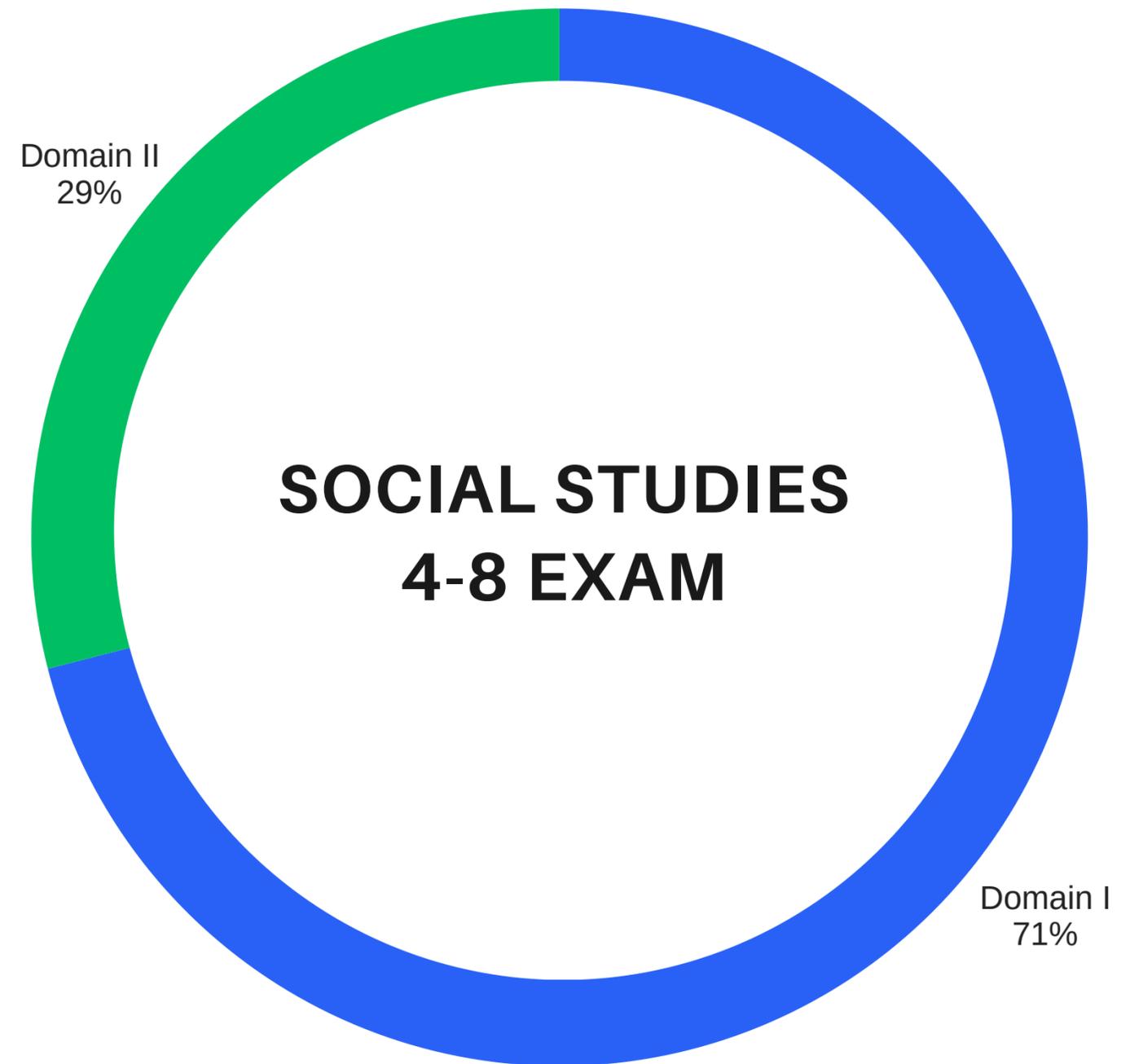
03. 100 selected-
response questions



I Social Studies Content

II Social Studies Foundations, Skills, and Instruction

Each section is made up of a number of competencies. Explore each section to learn the breakdown of the competencies and understand the type of questions in that section.



Domain I



Social Studies Content

Domain I Competencies

1.

HISTORY

2.

GEOGRAPHY

3.

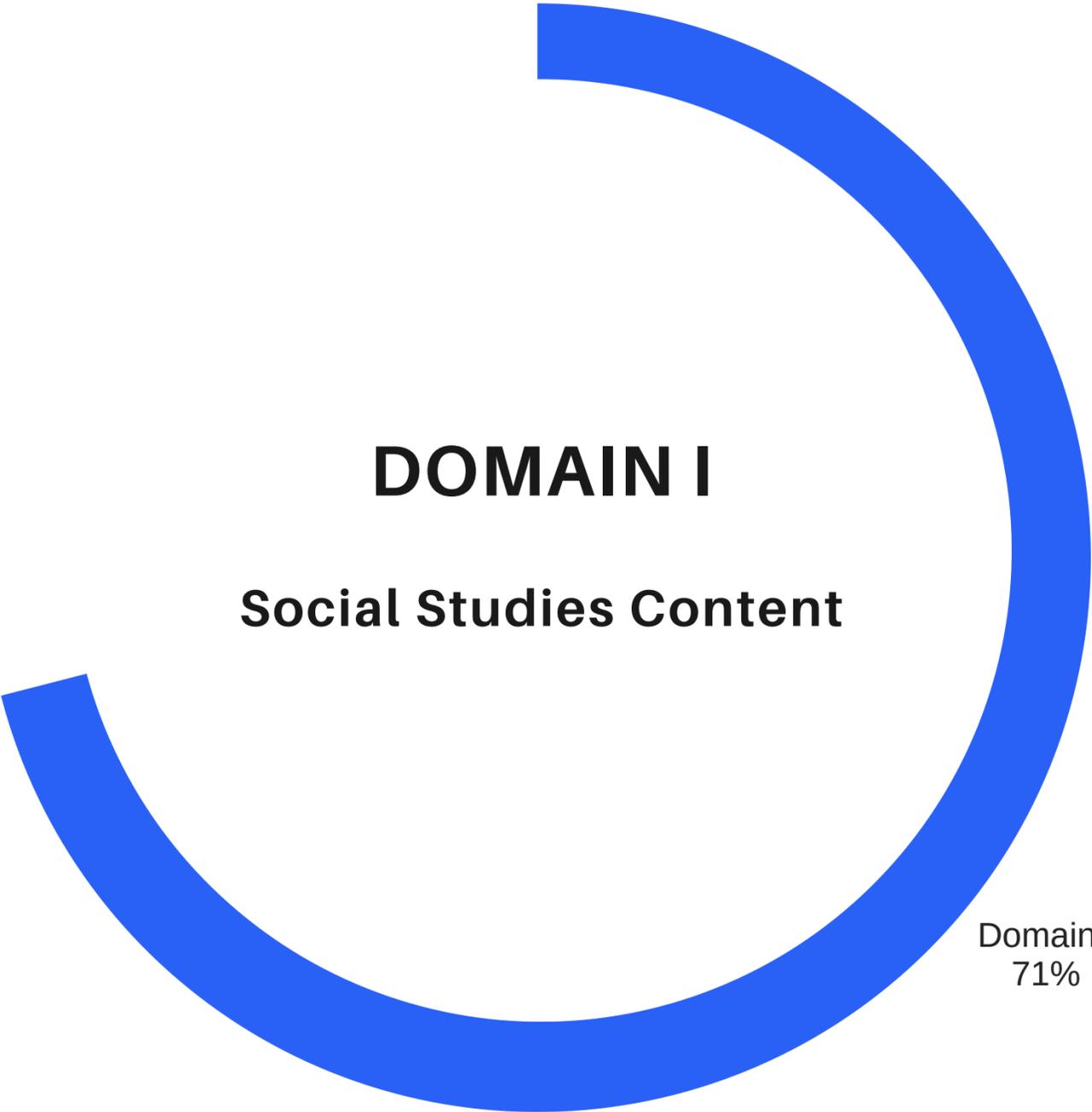
ECONOMICS

4.

GOVERNMENT AND
CITIZENSHIP

5.

CULTURE



Competency 1

The teacher understands and applies knowledge of significant historical events and developments, multiple historical interpretations and ideas and relationships between the past, the present and the future, as defined by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

Overview

- Covers significant events and developments in Texas, U.S., and world history from pre-colonial times through the 21st century
- Emphasizes analyzing cause-and-effect relationships, including how individuals and events shaped historical outcomes
- Requires understanding multiple historical perspectives and the use of chronology to interpret the past
- Includes knowledge of key Texas history milestones: exploration, independence, the Republic, and statehood
- Connects historical events to present-day societies and traces the impact of boom-and-bust economic cycles in Texas

Competency 2

The teacher understands and applies knowledge of geographic relationships involving people, places and environments in Texas, the United States and the world, as defined by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

Overview

- Focuses on geographic concepts like region, location, and the use of tools such as maps, graphs, and databases
- Requires understanding human and physical characteristics of places in Texas, the U.S., and the world
- Analyzes how humans adapt to, modify, and are affected by the physical environment
- Covers physical processes like erosion, plate tectonics, and weather/climate and their environmental effects
- Examines how geographic factors influence settlement, economics, and political development

Competency 3

The teacher understands and applies knowledge of economic systems and how people organize economic systems to produce, distribute and consume goods and services, as defined by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

Overview

- Covers foundational economic concepts: scarcity, supply and demand, free enterprise, and factors of production
- Requires knowledge of how different economic systems around the world are organized and compared
- Analyzes the roles of producers, consumers, government regulation, and taxation in economic activity
- Traces major economic trends historically, including shifts from agrarian to urban economies and industrialization
- Examines the interdependence of Texas, U.S., and global economies and the role of geographic factors in economic development

Government & Citizenship

Competency 4

The teacher understands and applies knowledge of government, democracy and citizenship, including ways in which individuals and groups achieve their goals through political systems, as defined by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

Government & Citizenship

Overview

- Covers the structure and functions of federal, state, and local government, including key political documents like the U.S. and Texas Constitutions
- Requires understanding the historical origins of democracy and early U.S. political debates (Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists)
- Includes knowledge of landmark Supreme Court cases and how constitutional changes have impacted society
- Examines the rights, responsibilities, and roles of citizens in a democratic society
- Highlights contributions of important political, military, and social reform leaders in Texas and U.S. history

Competency 5

The teacher understands and applies knowledge of creative development, adaptation and differences, and understands and applies knowledge of interactions among science, technology and society, as defined by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

Overview

- Analyzes how cultures develop, adapt, and exchange ideas, customs, and traditions across societies
- Covers the role of art, music, literature, and oral tradition in shaping cultural identity
- Examines the impact of race, religion, socioeconomic class, and gender roles across societies past and present
- Requires knowledge of key scientific and technological innovations and their inventors
- Analyzes how science and technology have shaped political, economic, social, and environmental developments

Sample Question 1

A teacher is designing a lesson on the causes of the Civil War. Which of the following best illustrates the concept of sectionalism in the antebellum South?

- A) The growth of the abolitionist movement in Northern states
- B) Economic and cultural divisions between the North and South rooted in slavery
- C) The federal government's enforcement of the Indian Removal Act
- D) Westward expansion driven by the Monroe Doctrine

Sample Question 1

Answer: B

Sectionalism refers to the deep economic, cultural, and political divisions between regions of the country. In the antebellum period, these divisions centered on slavery — the South's plantation-based economy depended on it, while the industrializing North increasingly opposed it. The other options describe real historical events but do not directly illustrate the concept of sectionalism.

Sample Question 2

A fifth-grade teacher wants students to understand how physical geography influenced settlement in Texas. Which activity would best support this learning goal?

- A) Studying and memorizing the capitals of all 50 states
- B) Comparing maps of Texas river systems and early colonial settlement locations
- C) Reading a biography of a Texas political leader that influenced settlement
- D) Watching a video about the Industrial Revolution

Sample Question 2

Answer: B

This question tests both geographic knowledge and instructional design. Comparing river systems to settlement patterns directly connects physical geography to human decision-making – a core geographic concept. Rivers provided water, transportation, and fertile land, making them key factors in where early settlers chose to live. The other options do not connect physical geography to settlement.

Sample Question 3

Which of the following is the best example of the concept of scarcity?

- A) A community deciding to build a new school
- B) A city raising property taxes to fund public roads
- C) A business importing goods from another country
- D) A farmer choosing to grow wheat instead of corn because water is limited

Sample Question 3

Answer: D

Scarcity is the idea that resources are limited relative to human wants, which forces people to make choices. The farmer in option B must choose between crops specifically because water — a key resource — is limited. While the other options involve economic decisions, none of them are driven by a shortage of a specific resource the way option D is.

Sample Question 4

A teacher is explaining the significance of *Marbury v. Madison* to eighth graders. Which of the following best describes the lasting impact of this Supreme Court case?

- A) It established the federal government's power to levy taxes
- B) It abolished slavery in all Union states
- C) It established the principle of judicial review
- D) It granted citizenship to formerly enslaved people

Sample Question 4

Answer: C

Marbury v. Madison (1803) is one of the most important Supreme Court cases in U.S. history because it established judicial review — the power of the Supreme Court to declare laws unconstitutional. This principle is a cornerstone of the balance of powers in the U.S. government. Option A relates to taxation powers, B refers to the Emancipation Proclamation, and D refers to the 14th Amendment.

Sample Question 5

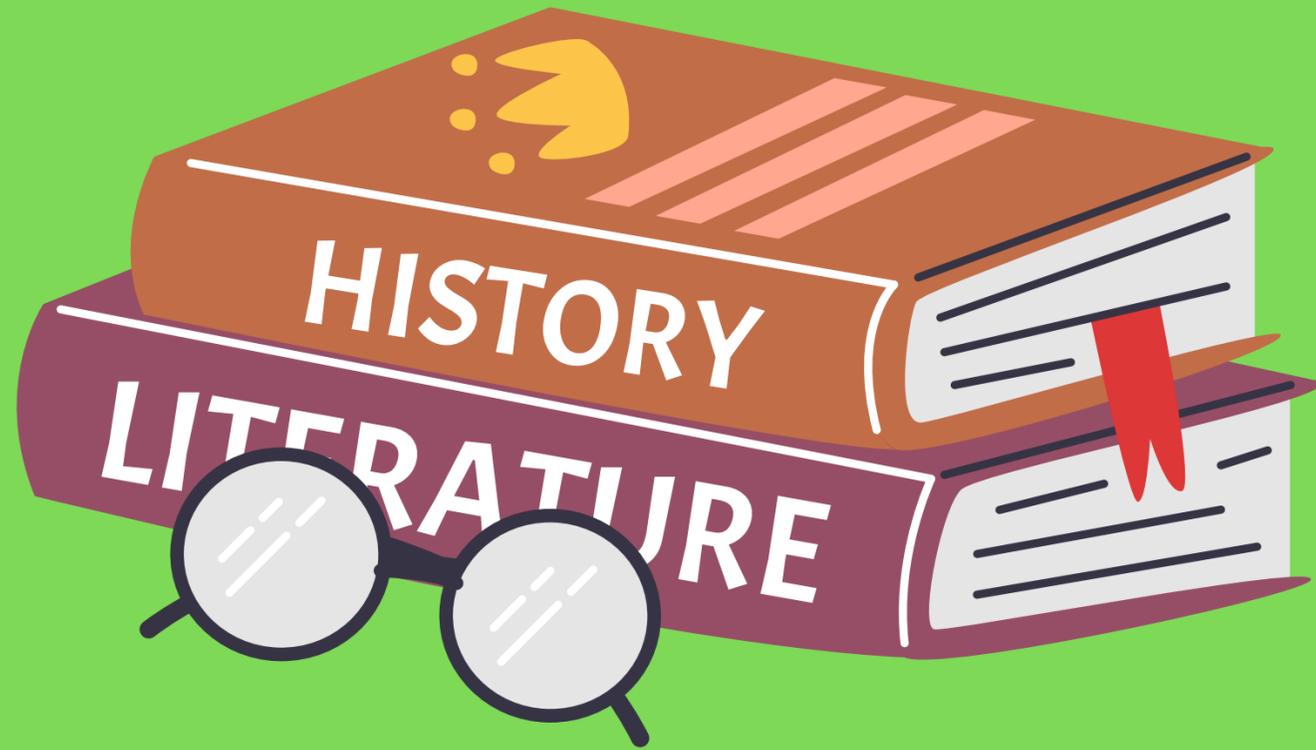
How did the invention of the railroad most significantly affect nineteenth-century American society?

- A) It had little effect on population movement
- B) It accelerated westward expansion and urbanization
- C) It reduced the economic dependence on agriculture
- D) It eliminated the need for river-based trade

Sample Question 5

Answer: B

The railroad was one of the most transformative technologies of the 19th century. It made it faster and cheaper to travel and ship goods across long distances, which directly fueled westward expansion and the growth of cities along rail lines. While railroads did change trade patterns, they did not fully eliminate river-based trade (option D), and agriculture remained a major part of the economy well into the 20th century.



Social Studies Foundations, Skills, and Instruction

Domain II Competencies

5.

FOUNDATIONS AND SKILLS

6.

INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

Domain II
29%



DOMAIN II
Social Studies
Foundations, Skills, &
Instruction

Competency 6

The teacher understands the foundations of social studies education and applies knowledge of skills used in the social sciences.

Foundations and Skills

Overview

- Covers the philosophical foundations of social science disciplines and how they relate to one another
- Requires proficiency in using primary and secondary sources to gather and evaluate information
- Emphasizes research skills: formulating questions, analyzing data, and drawing evidence-based conclusions
- Includes critical thinking skills like comparing, contrasting, making inferences, and evaluating bias and propaganda
- Covers communication, problem-solving, conflict resolution, and proper use of social studies terminology

Competency 7

The teacher plans and implements effective instruction and assessment in social studies.

Instruction and Assessment

Overview

- Requires knowledge of the Texas TEKS standards and their vertical alignment across grade levels
- Emphasizes selecting and using effective instructional strategies, technologies, and materials
- Covers how to connect social studies concepts across disciplines and to other content areas
- Includes understanding child development stages and how they inform instructional design
- Requires use of multiple assessment forms to evaluate student progress and guide instruction for all learners, including ELLs

Sample Question 6

A student is researching the Texas Revolution and finds a journal entry written by a Spanish missionary living in San Antonio during the 1830s. The student notices the author praises the Mexican government's policies toward settlers. Which is the most appropriate first step in evaluating this source?

- A) Determine whether the journal has been translated accurately from its original language
- B) Consider how the author's role as a Spanish missionary and relationship with the Mexican government may have shaped the information recorded
- C) Check whether the journal entry has been cited by other historians in their published works
- D) Verify that the dates mentioned in the journal align with the official timeline of the Texas Revolution

Sample Question 6

Answer: B

While all of the options describe reasonable steps in source evaluation, the most critical first step is considering how the author's perspective and position may have influenced what was recorded and how. As a Spanish missionary with ties to the Mexican government, the author likely had a bias that shaped the way events were described. Options A, C, and D are all valid parts of source evaluation, but they address accuracy and credibility rather than the more foundational issue of point of view and bias.

Sample Question 7

A seventh-grade teacher wants to assess whether students understand the effects of westward expansion on Native American communities. The class includes several English Language Learners and students with varying reading levels. Which assessment strategy best measures content understanding while being equitable for all learners?

- A) Assigning a written essay requiring students to analyze a primary source document and support their argument with textual evidence.
- B) Giving all students the same multiple-choice quiz based on key vocabulary and dates from the unit.
- C) Allowing students to choose how they demonstrate their understanding – such as through a written response, oral presentation, or annotated visual – while holding all students to the same content expectations.
- D) Pairing students together so that stronger readers can help ELL students complete a shared written summary.

Sample Question 7

Answer: C

Option C maintains rigorous, consistent content expectations while allowing students to demonstrate understanding in ways that don't disadvantage ELLs or struggling readers. Option A may inadvertently measure literacy rather than content knowledge. Option B only assesses recall. Option D sounds supportive, but it does not accurately assess individual understanding and may allow some students to avoid engaging with the content entirely.



Additional Resources

Breakdown of Social Studies 4-8 Test 118

Thank You

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