

# Grade 4

The content of the assessment varies by grade to reflect the knowledge and skills appropriate for each grade level, with differing proportions of assessment time devoted to each of the historical themes, historical periods, and cognitive areas outlined in the introduction.

Many of the questions in the assessment were designed to enable students to draw upon the knowledge and skills gained from their elementary social studies units. In 2006, a slightly higher proportion of fourth-grade assessment time was devoted to the Culture theme than the Technology, Democracy, or World Role themes. Fourth-graders answered questions across all historical time periods, with about 50 percent of the assessment time focused on the four early historical periods.

# U.S. History Achievement Levels at Grade 4

The achievement levels represent what students should know and be able to do in U.S. history at each level. The following are achievement-level descriptions for U.S. history at grade 4 with the corresponding "cut scores" (scores depicting the lowest score representative of that level) noted in parentheses.

**Basic** (195): Fourth-grade students performing at the *Basic* level should be able to identify and describe a few of the most familiar people, places, events, ideas, and documents in American history. They should be able to explain the reasons for celebrating most national holidays, have some familiarity with the geography of their own state and the United States, and be able to express in writing a few ideas about a familiar theme in American history.

**Proficient** (243): Fourth-grade students performing at the *Proficient* level should be able to identify, describe, and comment on the significance of many historical people, places, ideas, events, and documents. They should be able to interpret information from a variety of sources, including texts, maps, pictures, and timelines. They should be able to construct a simple timeline from data. These students should recognize the role of invention and technological change in

history. They should also recognize the ways in which geographic and environmental factors have influenced life and work.

Advanced (276): Fourth-grade students performing at the Advanced level should have a beginning understanding of the relationships between people, places, ideas, events, and documents. They should know where to look for information, including reference books, maps, local museums, interviews with family and neighbors, and other sources. They should be able to use historical themes to organize and interpret historical topics and to incorporate insights from beyond the classroom into their understanding of history. These students should understand and be able to explain the role of invention and technological change in history. They should also understand and be able to explain the ways in which geographic and environmental factors have influenced life and work.

# **Question on Causes of the Civil War**

This sample question related to a quote by Abraham Lincoln assessed students' skills in historical analysis and interpretation in the Democracy theme. To answer correctly, students needed to interpret the quote about divisions over slavery leading up to the Civil War.

The percentages below indicate how students performed on the question. Overall, 46 percent of fourth-graders answered the question correctly. When looking at how students performing at different levels did on this question, 49 percent of students performing at the *Basic* level answered correctly, and 73 percent of students at the *Proficient* level answered correctly.

ſ	Percentage correct in 2006						
	<b>Overall</b>	Below Basic	At Basic	At <i>Proficient</i>	At Advanced		
	46	25	49	73	‡		

‡ Reporting standards not met. Sample size is insufficient to permit a reliable estimate. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2006 U.S. History Assessment.

A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided.

—Abraham Lincoln, 1858

What did Abraham Lincoln mean in this speech?

- A The South should be allowed to separate from the United States.
- B The government should support slavery in the South.
- Sometime in the future slavery would disappear from the United States.
- ① Americans would not be willing to fight a war over slavery.

# **Question About Westward Expansion**

Students answering this question about westward expansion had to combine a close study of the painting with knowledge of the factors that motivated people to settle on the frontier in the 19th century. This question assessed students' historical analysis and interpretation skills within the Culture theme.

Student responses for this constructed-response question were rated using the following three-level scoring guide:

- Complete responses accurately described two or three specific things in the painting that could have persuaded people to go west.
- Partial responses accurately described at least one thing from the painting.
- Inappropriate responses failed to provide any accurate descriptions.

The sample student response shown here was rated as "Complete," and the table below shows that 24 percent of fourth-graders were able to provide a "Complete" response to the question in 2006.

ſ	Percentage rated as "Complete" in 2006				
	<b>O</b> verall	Below Basic	At Basic	At <i>Proficient</i>	At Advanced
	24	5	25	50	‡

‡ Reporting standards not met. Sample size is insufficient to permit a reliable estimate. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2006 U.S. History





© Museum of the City of New York, Harry T. Peters Collection

Look carefully at the painting of a western town shown above. Describe three specific things you see in the painting that could have made people want to become settlers in the West.

- 1. There are lakes and river.
- 2. There are trans for building houses and store
- 3. There is a train so you can get from one place to another.

# What Fourth-Graders Know and Can Do in U.S. History

The item map is useful for understanding performance at different levels on the scale. The scale scores on the left represent the average scores for students who were likely to get the items correct or "Complete." The lower-boundary scores at each achievement level are noted in boxes. The descriptions of selected assessment questions are listed on the right along with the corresponding themes.

For example, the map on this page shows that fourth-graders performing in the middle of the *Basic* range (students with an average score of 221) were likely to be able to identify a common colonial occupation. Students performing near the top of the *Proficient* range (with an average score of 272) were likely to be able to identify the purpose of the Underground Railroad.

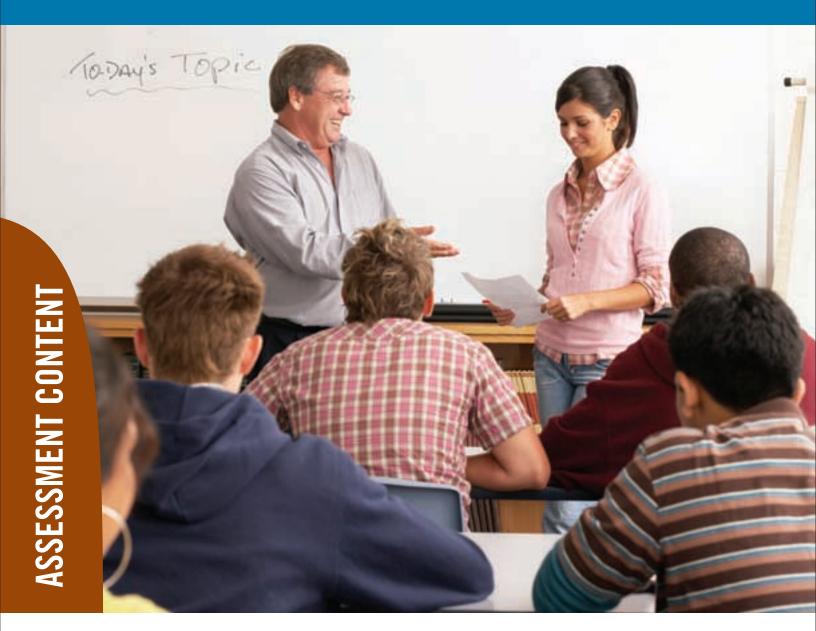
#### **GRADE 4 NAEP U.S. HISTORY ITEM MAP**



The position of a question on the scale represents the average scale score attained by students who had a 65 percent probability of correctly answering a constructed-response question, or a 74 percent probability of correctly answering a four-option multiple-choice question. Scale score ranges for U.S. history achievement levels are referenced on the map. For constructed-response questions, the question description represents students' performance rated as completely correct.

NOTE: Regular type denotes a constructed-response question. *Italic* type denotes a multiple-choice question.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2006 U.S. History Assessment.



# **Grade 8**

The proportion of eighth-grade assessment time devoted to each theme differed somewhat from the proportions at grade 4. A slightly higher proportion of eighth-grade assessment time was devoted to the Technology theme than to the Democracy, Culture, or World Role themes. Assessment time at the eighth grade was divided about evenly between the four early historical periods and the four later periods.

# **U.S. History Achievement Levels at Grade 8**

The achievement levels represent what students should know and be able to do in U.S. history at each level. The following are achievement-level descriptions for U.S. history at grade 8 with the corresponding "cut scores" (scores depicting the lowest score representative of that level) noted in parentheses.

**Basic** (252): Eighth-grade students performing at the *Basic* level should be able to identify and place in context a range of historical people, places, events, ideas, and documents. They should be able to distinguish between primary and secondary sources. They should have a beginning understanding of the diversity of the American people and the ways in which people from a wide variety of national and cultural heritages have become part of a single nation. Eighth-grade students at the *Basic* level should also have a beginning understanding of the fundamental political ideas and institutions of American life and their historical origins. They should be able to explain the significance of some major historical events.

**Proficient** (294): Eighth-grade students performing at the *Proficient* level should be able to explain the significance of people, places, events, ideas, and documents, and to recognize the connection between people and events within historical contexts. They should understand and be able to explain the opportunities, perspectives, and challenges associated

with a diverse cultural population. They should incorporate geographic, technological, and other considerations in their understanding of events and should have knowledge of significant political ideas and institutions. They should be able to communicate ideas about historical themes while citing evidence from primary and secondary sources to support their conclusions.

Advanced (327): Eighth-grade students performing at the Advanced level should recognize significant themes and movements in history and begin to understand particular events in light of these themes and movements. They should have an awareness of continuity and change over time and be able to draw relevant analogies between past events and present-day situations. They should be able to frame questions about historical topics and use multiple sources to develop historical generalizations and interpretations. They should be able to explain the importance of historical themes, including some awareness of their political, social, and economic dimensions.

# **Question on U.S. Foreign Policy**

Eighth-grade students were asked to demonstrate their historical knowledge of U.S. foreign policy in the following question from the World Role theme.

Overall, 33 percent of eighth-graders were able to correctly associate Latin America with the policies listed. More than one-half (60 percent) of students performing at the *Proficient* level answered correctly.

The Monroe Doctrine, the Good Neighbor Policy, and the Alliance for Progress were all United States foreign policy positions relating directly to

- Latin America
- Africa
- © the Middle East
- ① China

Percentage correct in 2006					
<b>Overall</b>	Below Basic	At Basic	At <i>Proficient</i>	At Advanced	
33	19	33	60	‡	

‡ Reporting standards not met. Sample size is insufficient to permit a reliable estimate. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2006 U.S. History Assessment.



### **Question About the Transcontinental Railroads**

In answering this question, students could use the map provided to describe the impact of the transcontinental railroad system on the development of the western United States. This question assessed students' skills in historical analysis and interpretation in the Technology theme.

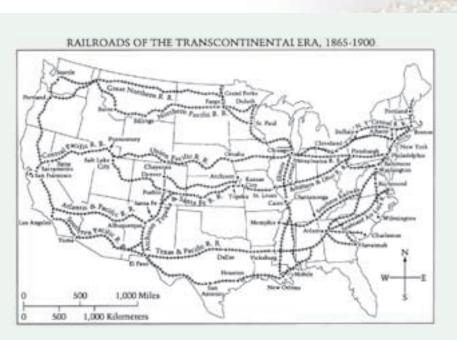
Student responses were rated using the following three-level scoring guide:

- Complete responses described at least two ways the West changed after the transcontinental railroad was built.
- Partial responses accurately described just one way the West changed.
- Inappropriate responses did not accurately describe any significant change.

The sample student response shown here was rated as "Complete." Overall, 39 percent of eighth-graders were able to provide a "Complete" response to the question in 2006.

[	Percentage rated as "Complete" in 2006				
	Overall	Below Basic	At Basic	At <i>Proficient</i>	At Advanced
	39	13	46	73	‡

‡ Reporting standards not met. Sample size is insufficient to permit a reliable estimate. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2006 U.S. History



Describe two ways that the western United States changed after the transcontinental (or cross-country) railroads were built. You can use the map to help you answer the question.

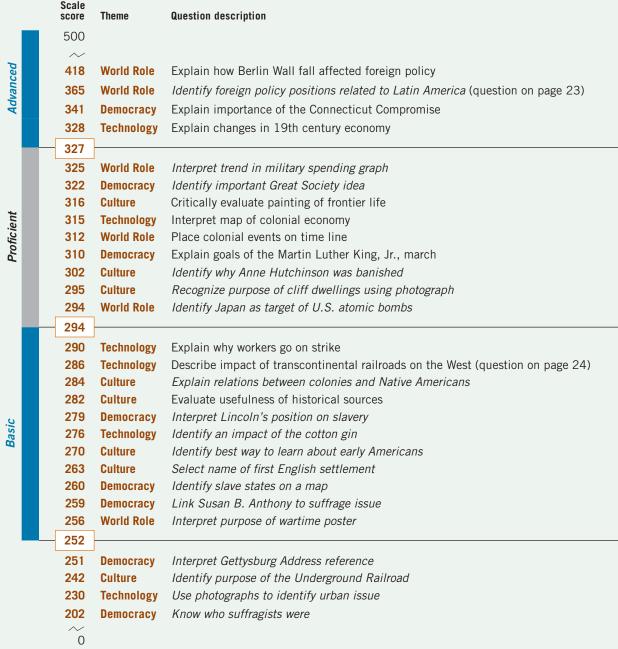
- The western states became more populated. The western states had more reade. 1)

# What Eighth-Graders Know and Can Do in U.S. History

The item map below illustrates the range of U.S. history knowledge and skills demonstrated by eighthgrade students. For example, students performing near the bottom of the *Basic* range (with an average score of 260) were likely to be able to identify the

slave states prior to the Civil War on a U.S. map. Students performing in the middle of the *Proficient* range (with an average score of 315) were likely to be able to interpret a map of the colonial economy.

#### **GRADE 8 NAEP U.S. HISTORY ITEM MAP**



The position of a question on the scale represents the average scale score attained by students who had a 65 percent probability of correctly answering a constructed-response question, or a 74 percent probability of correctly answering a four-option multiple-choice question. Scale score ranges for U.S. history achievement levels are referenced on the map. For constructed-response questions, the question description represents students' performance rated as completely correct.

NOTE: Regular type denotes a constructed-response question. *Italic* type denotes a multiple-choice question.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2006 U.S. History Assessment.



# Grade 12

In 2006, the assessment time at grade 12 was divided almost evenly across the four historical themes. The proportion of time devoted to World Role was higher than at either of the other two grades. As at the other grades, twelfth-graders also answered questions about Democracy, Culture, and Technology.

The chronological focus of the assessment at grade 12 shifted toward more recent history. Over 60 percent of assessment time was devoted to the four later periods.

## **U.S. History Achievement Levels at Grade 12**

The achievement levels represent what students should know and be able to do in U.S. history at each level. The following are achievement-level descriptions for U.S. history at grade 12 with the corresponding "cut scores" (scores depicting the lowest score representative of that level) noted in parentheses.

Basic (294): Twelfth-grade students performing at the Basic level should be able to identify the significance of many people, places, events, dates, ideas, and documents in U.S. history. They should also recognize the importance of unity and diversity in the social and cultural history of the United States and have an awareness of America's changing relationships with the rest of the world. They should have a sense of continuity and change in history and be able to relate relevant experience from the past to their understanding of contemporary issues. They should recognize that history is subject to interpretation and should understand the role of evidence in making a historical argument.

**Proficient** (325): Twelfth-grade students performing at the *Proficient* level should understand particular people, places, events, ideas, and documents in historical context, with some awareness of the political, economic, geographic, social, religious, technological, and

ideological factors that shape historical settings. They should be able to communicate reasoned interpretations of past events, using historical evidence effectively to support their positions. Their written arguments should reflect some indepth grasp of issues and should refer to both primary and secondary sources.

Advanced (355): Twelfth-grade students achieving at the Advanced level should demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of events and sources of U.S. history. Recognizing that history is subject to interpretation, they should be able to evaluate historical claims critically in light of the evidence. They should understand that important issues and themes have been addressed differently at different times and that America's political, social, and cultural traditions have changed over time. They should be able to write well-reasoned arguments on complex historical topics and draw upon a wide range of sources to inform their conclusions.

# Question on the Lewis and Clark Mission

The sample question presented here on the Lewis and Clark expedition assessed students' historical knowledge and perspective within the Culture theme.

To answer correctly, students had to recognize the route and relate it to the Louisiana Purchase. Overall, 63 percent of twelfth-graders answered the question correctly in 2006. When looking at how students performing at different levels did on this question, about four-fifths (81 percent) of the students performing at the *Proficient* level answered correctly.

Г	Percentage correct in 2006					
٠	<b>Overall</b>	Below Basic	At Basic At Proficient		At Advanced	
	63	54	70	81	‡	

‡ Reporting standards not met. Sample size is insufficient to permit a reliable estimate. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2006 U.S. History Assessment.



The expedition whose route is shown was undertaken to explore the

- (A) lands taken in the Mexican War
- ® lands taken from England in the War of 1812
- Louisiana Purchase
- Gadsden Purchase

### **Question About the Korean War**

In the sample question on this page, students were asked to identify a factor that led to U.S. involvement in the Korean War and to describe the factor's significance. This question measured students' skills in historical analysis and interpretation within the context of the World Role theme.

Student responses for this constructed-response question were rated using the following three-level scoring guide:

• Complete responses identified an important factor that led to U.S. involvement in the Korean War and explained why the factor was significant.

• Partial responses identified a factor but did not accurately explain its significance.

• **Inappropriate** responses did not accurately identify any factor leading to U.S. involvement.

The sample student response shown here was rated as "Complete," and the table below shows that less than one-fifth (14 percent) of twelfth-graders gave a "Complete" response to the question in 2006.

Γ	Percentage rated as "Complete" in 2006					
	Overall	Below Basic	At Basic	At <i>Proficient</i>	At Advanced	
	14	2	16	54	‡	

‡ Reporting standards not met. Sample size is insufficient to permit a reliable estimate. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2006 U.S. History Assessment.



Identify a significant factor that led to United States involvement in the Korean War.

A significant factor that led the Us into the Korean war was the fear of the domino-effect and the spread of communism.

Explain why this factor was significant.

Communism and socialism economically threatened the laisseng-faint capitalist economic system of the united states.

# What Twelfth-Graders Know and Can Do in U.S. History

The item map below shows that twelfth-graders performing in the middle of the *Basic* range (students with an average score of 306) were likely to be able to identify an important idea of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society program. Students performing in the

middle of the *Proficient* range (with an average score of 341) were likely to be able to identify an instance of segregation in a photograph and explain its impact on African Americans.

#### **GRADE 12 NAEP U.S. HISTORY ITEM MAP**

		Scale score	Theme	Question description		
		500				
		~				
Þ		406	Democracy	Interpret historical quotation and define Tories		
nce		398	Technology	Use data to explain changes in early 20th century lifestyle		
Advanced		364	Democracy	Explain importance of the Connecticut Compromise		
1		358	World Role	Explain message of Lyndon Johnson cartoon		
		355	World Role	Explain reason for involvement in the Korean War (question on page 28)		
		355				
		350	Culture	Identify consequence of important religious movement		
		345	Democracy	Interpret Thoreau quotation		
ent		341	Democracy	Identify segregation in photo and explain its impact on African Americans		
Proficient		336	Culture	Interpret quotation and explain Puritans' goal		
Pro		333	World Role	Explain post-WWII foreign policy		
		327	Culture	Identify immigration pattern and explain its causes		
		326	Culture	Identify slave rebellion leaders		
		325				
	·	322	Culture	Use documents to explain WWII impact on race		
		319	World Role	Identify historical period of political cartoon		
		311	Technology	Explain historical context of Supreme Court decisions		
sic		308	Culture	Relate Lewis and Clark route to Louisiana Purchase (question on page 27)		
Basic		306	Democracy	Identify important Great Society idea		
		301	Technology	Situate photograph geographically and chronologically		
		301	World Role	Interpret cartoon to explain attitudes toward League of Nations		
		295	Democracy	Identify a role of third parties		
		294				
		289	Technology	Identify an impact of the cotton gin		
		285	Democracy	Explain why liquor industry opposed women's suffrage		
		275	Culture	Identify Supreme Court decision		
		273	World Role	Identify purpose of wartime posters		
		271	Technology	Interpret message of wartime posters		
		$\sim$				
The pos	The position of a question on the scale represents the average scale score attained by students who had a 65 percent probability of correctly answering a constructed-					

The position of a question on the scale represents the average scale score attained by students who had a 65 percent probability of correctly answering a constructed-response question, or a 74 percent probability of correctly answering a four-option multiple-choice question. Scale score ranges for U.S. history achievement levels are referenced on the map. For constructed-response questions, the question description represents students' performance rated as completely correct.

NOTE: Regular type denotes a constructed-response question. *Italic* type denotes a multiple-choice question.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2006 U.S. History Assessment.

### **Technical Notes**

#### SAMPLING AND WEIGHTING

The schools and students participating in the 2006 NAEP U.S. history assessments are chosen to be a nationally representative sample. This sample was chosen using a multistage design that involved sampling students from the sampled schools, which include public schools and nonpublic schools (i.e., private schools, Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, and Department of Defense schools). More information on sampling can be found at <a href="http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/nathow.asp">http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/nathow.asp</a>.

Each school that participated in the assessment, and each student assessed, represents a portion of the population of interest. Results are weighted to make appropriate inferences between the student samples and the respective populations from which they are drawn. Sampling weights account for the disproportionate representation of the selected sample, for the oversampling of students who attend schools with high concentrations of minority students, and for the lower sampling rates of students who attend very small nonpublic schools.

#### INTERPRETING STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Standard errors represent the confidence that an estimate is close to the population value. Estimates based on smaller groups generally have larger standard errors. When an estimate—such as an average score—has a large standard error, a numerical difference that seems large may not be statistically significant. Differences of the same magnitude may or may not be statistically significant depending upon the size of the standard errors of the statistics.

For example, a 4-point difference between Black and Hispanic students may be statistically significant, while a 4-point difference between White and Asian/Pacific Islander students may not be. Standard errors for the NAEP scores and percentages presented in this report are available at <a href="http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde/">http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde/</a>.



#### SCHOOL/STUDENT PARTICIPATION RATES

The NAEP participation rates for the original sample need to be at least 70 percent for schools to meet reporting requirements established by NCES and the Governing Board. The overall school participation rates for grades 4, 8, and 12 were 91, 91, and 80 percent, respectively. The overall student participation rates were 95, 92, and 73 percent, respectively, for each of the three grades. The participation rates for public schools were 93, 94, and 83 percent at grades 4, 8, and 12, respectively. For private schools, they were 70 (after rounding), 63, and 46 percent at grades 4, 8, and 12, respectively. However, participation rates for Catholic schools, which are included in the private category, did meet reporting standards at grades 4 (95 percent) and 8 (82 percent). The results reported are based on the public and private schools combined at each of the three grades.

NAEP requires nonresponse bias analyses for certain types of schools when their initial school participation rate meets the reporting guidelines, but is below 85 percent. The results of the nonresponse bias analyses showed that school substitution and nonresponse adjustments were effective in reducing the observable nonresponse bias for grade 12 public schools. However, these adjustments did not fully account for the nonresponse bias of Catholic students in grade 4 private schools.

#### **PRIVATE SCHOOL RESULTS**

Results are available for private schools at grade 4 and Catholic schools at grades 4 and 8 in 2006. The average score in 2006 for fourth-grade private school students (227) was higher than the score for students in public schools (210). Fourth- and eighth-graders attending Catholic schools also scored higher than their peers in public schools. Catholic school students had an average score of 223 at grade 4 and 282 at grade 8 in 2006, both of which were not significantly different from their comparable scores in either 1994 or 2001. These data are available in the NAEP data tool (<a href="http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde/">http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde/</a>).

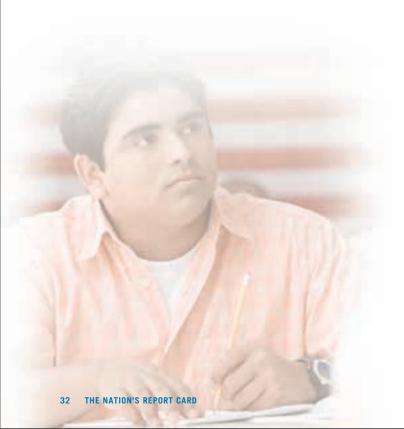


#### REPORTING RACE/ETHNICITY

The scores presented in this report for 1994, 2001, and 2006 are based on school reports of students' race/ethnicity. The numbers in this report differ from those in the NAEP history reports for 1994 and 2001. The categorization of race/ethnicity for those earlier reports was based on student self-identification.

#### NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

NAEP first began collecting data in 1996 on student eligibility for the National School Lunch Program as an indicator of a student's socioeconomic status. Under the guidelines of the National School Lunch Program, children from families with incomes below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those from families with incomes between 130 and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals. (For the period July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006, for a family of four, 130 percent of the poverty level was \$25,155, and 185 percent was \$35,798.)



#### **ACCOMMODATIONS**

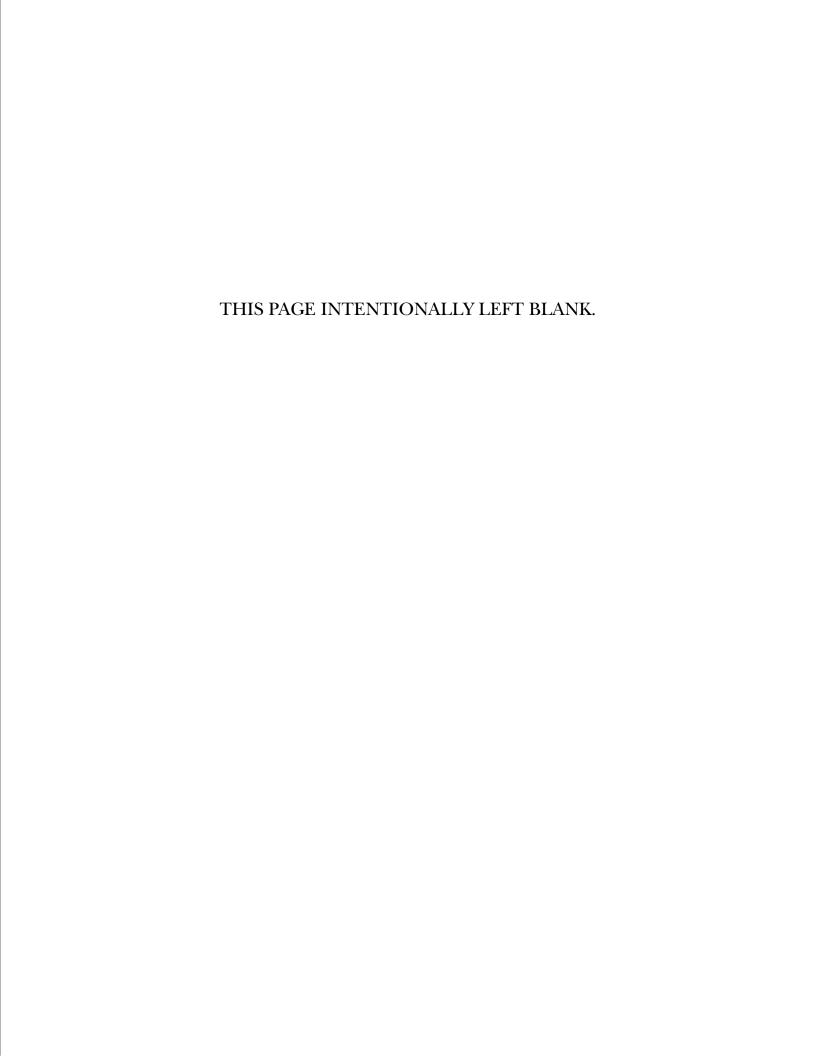
Certain types of accommodations have been used in the NAEP administration procedures since 2001 for students who required accommodations to participate in the U.S. history assessment. The students who received accommodations are, in general, students with disabilities (SD) and/or English language learners (ELL). Table 6 shows the percentages of students assessed with and without accommodations and percentages of students excluded because they could not meaningfully participate in the assessment even with the accommodations NAEP allows. The percentages of students assessed with accommodations increased at all three grades in 2006 compared to 2001.

Table 6. Percentage of students with disabilities (SD) and/or English language learners (ELL), identified, excluded, and assessed in NAEP U.S. history, by grade: 2001 and 2006

allu 2000		
Grade 4	2001	2006
SD and/or ELL		
Identified	18*	23
Excluded	3	3
Assessed	14*	20
Without accommodations	6*	10
With accommodations	8*	10
Grade 8	2001	2006
SD and/or ELL		
Identified	17	19
Excluded	3*	2
Assessed	13*	17
Without accommodations	7	7
With accommodations	6*	10
Grade 12	2001	2006
SD and/or ELL		
Identified	10*	13
Excluded	2	2
Assessed	7*	11
Without accommodations	5	4
With accommodations	3*	6

<sup>\*</sup> Significantly different (p < .05) from 2006.

NOTE: Students identified as both SD and ELL were counted only once under the combined SD and/or ELL category. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2001 and 2006 U.S. History Assessments.



#### U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a congressionally mandated project sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The National Center for Education Statistics, a department within the Institute of Education Sciences, administers NAEP. The Commissioner of Education Statistics is responsible by law for carrying out the NAEP project.

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May 2007

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SUGGESTED CITATION

Lee, J., and Weiss, A. (2007). The Nation's Report Card: U.S. History 2006 (NCES 2007-474). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

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