



Achievement Level Descriptors
for
Grade 8 Social Studies

Georgia Department of Education
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Achievement Levels and Achievement Level Descriptors

With the implementation of the Georgia Milestones Assessment System, Georgia educators have developed four achievement levels to describe student mastery and command of the knowledge and skills outlined in Georgia’s content standards. Most students have at least some knowledge of the content described in the content standards; however, achievement levels succinctly describe how much mastery a student has. Achievement levels give meaning and context to scale scores by describing the knowledge and skills students must demonstrate to achieve each level.

The four achievement levels on Georgia Milestones are *Beginning Learner*, *Developing Learner*, *Proficient Learner*, and *Distinguished Learner*. The general meaning of each of the four levels is provided below:

Beginning Learners do not yet demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students ***need substantial academic support*** to be prepared for the next grade level or course and to be on track for college and career readiness.

Developing Learners demonstrate partial proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students ***need additional academic support*** to ensure success in the next grade level or course and to be on track for college and career readiness.

Proficient Learners demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students ***are prepared*** for the next grade level or course and are on track for college and career readiness.

Distinguished Learners demonstrate advanced proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students ***are well prepared*** for the next grade level or course and are well prepared for college and career readiness.

More detailed and content-specific concepts and skills are provided for each grade, content area, and course in the **Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs)**. ALDs are narrative descriptions of the knowledge and skills expected at each of the four achievement levels and were developed for each grade level, content area, and course by committees of Georgia educators in March 2015 and July 2015. The ALDs are based on the state-adopted content standards.

ALDs show a progression of knowledge and skills for which students must demonstrate competency across the achievement levels. It is important to understand that a student should demonstrate mastery of the knowledge and skills within his/her achievement level *as well as all content and skills in any achievement levels that precede his/her own, if any*. For example, a Proficient Learner should also possess the knowledge and skills of a Developing Learner *and* a Beginning Learner.

POLICY ALDs			
Beginning Learner	Developing Learner	Proficient Learner	Distinguished Learner
<p>Beginning Learners do not yet demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students need substantial academic support to be prepared for the next grade level or course and to be on track for <i>college and career readiness</i>.</p>	<p>Developing Learners demonstrate partial proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students need additional academic support to ensure success in the next grade level or course and to be on track for <i>college and career readiness</i>.</p>	<p>Proficient Learners demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students are prepared for the next grade level or course and are on track for <i>college and career readiness</i>.</p>	<p>Distinguished Learners demonstrate advanced proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students are well prepared for the next grade level or course and are well prepared for <i>college and career readiness</i>.</p>
RANGE ALDs			
Beginning Learner	Developing Learner	Proficient Learner	Distinguished Learner
<p>A student who achieves at the Beginning Learner level demonstrates minimal command of the grade-level standards. The pattern exhibited by student responses indicates that students are most likely able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify Native American cultures in Georgia; • identify the location of key physical features of Georgia; • locate on a map the Interstate Highway System, the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, and Georgia’s railroads and deep-water ports; • identify kinds of goods or services produced in Georgia in different historical periods; • identify revenue sources provided by state and local governments; 	<p>A student who achieves at the Developing Learner level demonstrates partial command of the grade-level standards. The pattern exhibited by student responses indicates that students are most likely able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe Native American cultures in Georgia; • locate European exploration in Georgia; • identify the role of Georgia in the American Revolution; • identify the events that led to the ratification of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights; • identify, using various sources, the impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on Georgia; • identify the economic, social, or political impact of World War II 	<p>A student who achieves at the Proficient Learner level demonstrates proficiency of the grade-level standards. The pattern exhibited by student responses indicates that students are most likely able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe, using various sources, the development of Native American cultures and the impact of European exploration on the Native American cultures in Georgia; • describe, using various sources, the colonial period of Georgia’s history; • explain the role of Georgia in the American Revolution from primary documents; • describe the impact of events that led to the ratification of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of 	<p>A student who achieves at the Distinguished Learner level demonstrates advanced proficiency of the grade-level standards. The pattern exhibited by student responses indicates that students are most likely able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyze, using various sources, the development of Native American cultures and the impact of European exploration on the Native American cultures in Georgia; • analyze, using various sources, the colonial period of Georgia’s history; • analyze the role of Georgia in the American Revolution from primary documents; • describe the impact of events that led to the ratification of

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the branches of state and local governments; and • identify the historical stages that Georgia experienced from colonial time to the post-modern era. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on Georgia’s development; • locate Georgia with regard to physical features or location; • identify how the Interstate Highway System, the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, and Georgia’s railroads or deep-water ports help drive the state’s economy; • identify the role of local governments in the state of Georgia; • identify the role of the legislative branch in Georgia state government; • identify the role of the executive branch in Georgia state government; • identify the role of the judicial branch in Georgia state government; • describe the kinds of goods and services produced in Georgia in different historical periods; • identify revenue sources for and services provided by state and local governments; and • identify personal money management choices in terms of income, spending, credit, saving, and investing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rights; • identify significant factors that affected the development of Georgia as part of the growth of the United States between 1789 and 1840; • explain, using various sources, the impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on Georgia; • identify, using various sources, key political, social, and economic changes that occurred in Georgia between 1877 and 1918; • describe the economic, social, and political impact of World War II on Georgia’s development; • identify, using various sources, key post–World War II developments in Georgia from 1945 to 1970; • describe Georgia with regard to physical features and location; • explain how the Interstate Highway System, the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, and Georgia’s railroads and deep-water ports help drive the state’s economy; • explain, using various sources, the role of local governments in the state of Georgia; • explain, using various sources, the role of the legislative branch in Georgia state government; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights; • explain significant factors that affected the development of Georgia as part of the growth of the United States between 1789 and 1840; • analyze, using various sources, the impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on Georgia; • explain, using various sources, key political, social, and economic changes that occurred in Georgia between 1877 and 1918; • compare the economic, social, and political impact of World War II on Georgia’s development; • explain, using various sources, key post–World War II developments in Georgia from 1945 to 1970; • evaluate the impact of Georgia’s geography, climate, and location on Georgia’s development; • evaluate how the Interstate Highway System, the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, and Georgia’s railroads and deep-water ports help drive the state’s economy; • evaluate, using various sources, the role of local governments in the state of Georgia;
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