

# Introduction to the Grade 4 Delaware Social Studies Achievement Level Descriptors

The social studies test in the Delaware System of Student Assessment (DeSSA) is designed to measure how well a student meets the expectations of the Delaware Social Studies Standards. The standards call for understanding the purposes, principles, and concepts of four content areas of social studies: civics, economics, geography, and history. The standards require students to demonstrate understanding through explanation, interpretation, and analysis. The role of the DeSSA Social Studies test is to provide evidence that students can take what they learned in the classroom and transfer their knowledge and understanding to a new context or situation presented in the test.

The expectation of the standards is that students go beyond the retention of a body of facts to an understanding of the “why” and “how” of social studies concepts and big ideas. The standards do not expect, for example, that students understand all the complexities and problems of representative democracy by grade 4. Civics Standard One for 4th grade asks students to understand that the United States government is divided into three branches with specific responsibilities and powers. To simply know the responsibilities and powers of each branch does not meet the expectation of the standard. To demonstrate the level of thinking in the standard, students should understand why those responsibilities and powers are divided: Would it be easier for the government to get things done without the checks and balances of three branches? Why not put them into one big branch? The expectations of the standards increase in complexity and require higher levels of thinking as students progress through the grade levels.

The Social Studies Achievement Level Descriptors are aligned with and derived from the standards and the DeSSA Grade 4 Social Studies test. These performance descriptors identify the skills and concepts that are present in the standards and that are assessed on the social studies test. Your student’s achievement has been summarized in terms of how frequently and how well he or she is able to demonstrate the ability to transfer knowledge of social studies content and concepts in order to make decisions, solve problems, and address issues in both historical and contemporary settings.

## Delaware System of Student Assessments (DeSSA) Social Studies Grade 4 Achievement Level Descriptors

Grade-level ability to interpret, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize information from a variety of primary and secondary social studies sources in order to demonstrate an understanding of key social studies content and concepts

<b>Disciplinary Connection</b>	<b>Level 4: Advanced</b> (Highly Developed Ability)	<b>Level 3: Meets the Standard</b> (Satisfactory Ability)	<b>Level 2: Below the Standard</b> (Partially Developed Ability)	<b>Level 1: Well Below the Standard</b> (Minimally Developed Ability)
Civics Economics Geography History	Convert information from one form to another by <b>analyzing</b> social studies materials in order to <b>create chronologies</b> .	Convert information from one form to another by <b>analyzing</b> social studies materials in order to <b>classify, sort, or categorize information</b> .	Convert information from one form to another by <b>using</b> social studies materials to classify, sort, or categorize information.	Convert information from one form to another by using social studies materials to classify, sort, or categorize information.
Civics Economics Geography History	<b>Construct and interpret</b> chronologies and mental maps to situate events and geographic features in time and space.	<b>Interpret</b> chronologies and mental maps to situate events and geographic features in time and space.	<b>Use</b> chronologies and mental maps to situate events and geographic features in time and space.	Use chronologies and mental maps to situate events and geographic features in time and space.
Civics Economics Geography History	<b>Analyze</b> social studies materials in order to <b>explain cause-and-effect relationships</b> .	<b>Interpret</b> social studies materials in order to explain cause-and-effect relationships.	<b>Use</b> social studies materials in order to <b>identify</b> cause-and-effect relationships.	Use social studies materials in order to identify <b>a cause or effect</b> .
Civics Economics Geography History	<b>Analyze</b> the reasons for differing strategies, choices, responsibilities, and opinions.	<b>Apply</b> the reasons for differing strategies, choices, responsibilities, and opinions.	<b>Explain</b> the reasons for differing strategies, choices, responsibilities, and opinions.	<b>Distinguish</b> between different strategies, choices, responsibilities, and opinions.
Civics Economics Geography History	<b>Evaluate</b> the accuracy and relevance of social studies materials.	<b>Analyze</b> the accuracy and relevance of social studies materials.	<b>Explain</b> the accuracy and relevance of social studies materials.	<b>Recognize</b> the accuracy and relevance of social studies materials.

Grade-level ability to apply social studies content and concepts to real-life situations by transferring knowledge from the abstract to the concrete level

<b>Disciplinary Connection</b>	<b>Level 4: Advanced</b> (Highly Developed Ability)	<b>Level 3: Meets the Standard</b> (Satisfactory Ability)	<b>Level 2: Below the Standard</b> (Partially Developed Ability)	<b>Level 1: Well Below the Standard</b> (Minimally Developed Ability)
Civics Economics Geography History	<b>Synthesize</b> information <b>within and between</b> the social studies disciplines in order to develop a reasoned explanation <b>supported by social studies evidence and by the use of vocabulary that is content appropriate.</b>	<b>Analyze</b> information within <b>or</b> between the social studies disciplines in order to develop a reasoned explanation supported by social studies evidence and by the use of vocabulary that is content appropriate.	<b>Use</b> information <b>within</b> a social studies discipline in order to develop a reasoned explanation <b>supported by social studies evidence.</b>	Use information within a social studies discipline in order to develop a <b>flawed explanation</b> that is <b>not</b> supported by social studies evidence.
Civics Economics Geography History	<b>Synthesize</b> information from <b>different types of sources</b> to reach a <b>conclusion</b> , make a <b>prediction</b> , or <b>solve a problem</b> in social studies.	<b>Analyze</b> information from different types of sources to reach a conclusion, make a prediction, or solve a problem in social studies.	<b>Use</b> information from a <b>source</b> to <b>explain</b> an answer.	Use information from a source to <b>answer a basic question.</b>
Civics Economics Geography History	<b>Analyze</b> similarities, differences, patterns, and relationships to <b>apply and to explain</b> key social studies content and concepts.	Analyze similarities, differences, patterns, and relationships to <b>explain</b> key social studies content and concepts.	<b>Compare</b> similarities, differences, patterns, and relationships to <b>identify</b> key social studies content and concepts.	Compare <b>similarities and differences</b> to identify key social studies content and concepts.