

Introduction to the Grade 11 Delaware Social Studies Achievement Level Descriptors

The social studies test in the Delaware System of Student Assessments (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 just recall the characteristics of world cultures, past and present, by grade 11. Geography Standard Three at the 9–12 level asks students to understand the processes that result in distinctive cultures. To simply know that cultures are different does not meet the expectation of the standard. To demonstrate the level of thinking in the standard, students should understand how and why cultures change: Does human migration reduce or increase cultural diversity? Why? 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 the standards and the DeSSA Social Studies test. These achievement level 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 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 11 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

Disciplinary Connection	Level 4: Advanced (Highly Developed Ability)	Level 3: Meets the Standard (Satisfactory Ability)	Level 2: Below the Standard (Partially Developed Ability)	Level 1: Well Below the Standard (Minimally Developed Ability)
Civics Economics Geography History	Convert information from one form to another by analyzing social studies materials in order to evaluate patterns within or across disciplines.	Convert information from one form to another by analyzing social studies materials in order to classify, sort, or categorize information.	Convert information from one form to another by using social studies materials in order to classify, sort, or categorize information.	Convert information from one form to another by using social studies materials in order to classify, sort, or categorize information.
Civics Economics Geography History	Construct and interpret chronologies and mental maps to analyze events in time and space.	Interpret chronologies and mental maps to analyze events in time and space.	Use chronologies and mental maps to situate and explain events in time and space.	Use chronologies and mental maps to situate events in time and space.
Civics Economics Geography History	Interpret the impact of multiple causes and use information to predict likely effects.	Analyze cause-and-effect relationships.	Explain cause-and-effect relationships.	Identify cause-and-effect relationships.
History	Analyze the reasons for differing purposes, perspectives, and points of view in order to distinguish between facts and interpretations.	Apply the reasons for differing purposes, perspectives, and points of view in order to distinguish between facts and interpretations.	Explain the reasons for differing purposes, perspectives, and points of view.	Distinguish between facts and interpretations.
Civics Economics Geography History	Evaluate the accuracy, credibility, and relevance of social studies materials.	Analyze the accuracy, credibility, and relevance of social studies materials.	Explain the accuracy, credibility, and relevance of social studies materials.	Recognize the accuracy, credibility, 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

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