

Introduction

You are going to be a social studies teacher! You have chosen an admirable, rewarding, challenging profession, and for that you should be congratulated. To be a professional, however, you must be licensed. If you are sick, you go to a licensed doctor; if you need legal help, you go to a licensed attorney; if you need a haircut, you go to a licensed cosmetologist; if you want an education, you go to a licensed teacher. So, let's get you licensed! One step in the licensing process is to pass your state's required Praxis II: Social Studies Content Knowledge Test. This book will help you prepare for that test.

About the Exam

The Social Studies Content Knowledge Test is designed to determine your knowledge and skills—the knowledge and skills that are necessary for a beginning teacher of social studies in a secondary school. The test requires you to understand and apply social studies knowledge, concepts, methodologies, and skills across the fields of world history (22 percent of the exam); United States history (22 percent); government/political science/civics (16 percent); geography (15 percent); economics (15 percent); and the behavioral science fields of sociology, anthropology, and psychology (10 percent).

A number of the questions are interdisciplinary, reflecting the complex relationships among the social studies fields. Answering the questions correctly requires knowing, interpreting, and integrating history and social science facts and concepts.

Some questions are based on knowledge. Some questions are based on interpreting material such as written passages, maps, graphs, tables, cartoons, and diagrams. Some questions contain content reflecting the diverse experiences of people in the United States as related to gender, culture, and/or race, and/or content relating to Latin America, Africa, Asia, or Oceania.

The test and this book use the chronological designations B.C.E. (before the common era) and C.E. (common era). These labels correspond to B.C. (before Christ) and A.D. (anno Domini), which are used in some world history textbooks.

How to Use This Book

This book is divided into two sections. Part I contains the subject review material. Each of the six major areas is presented in an easy-to-understand summary format. Part II contains two complete practice tests of 130 questions each, with answers and explanations. You should take each section as you would an actual test. Each section is timed, and it would be helpful to take the tests in a quiet room, with no distractions. The purpose of taking these practice tests is to help you become familiar with the types of questions you will encounter on the Social Studies Content Knowledge Test. Complete the practice tests, self-correct, and then study the explanations.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How do I register for the test?

A. Contact the Education Testing Service (ETS) at www.ets.org/praxis.

Q. How do I know which test to take?

A. Contact the State Department of Education for the state for which you seek teacher licensure. Use your favorite search engine to locate your State Department of Education's teaching certification office.

Q. What score do I need to pass the test and earn my teaching license?

A. Each State Department of Education sets its passing score. You should contact your State Department of Education for this answer.

Q. Do all states require the test for teacher licensure?

A. No, but several do. Some states have created their own licensure test. Some states use other Praxis II tests. Again, contact your State Department of Education for specifics.

Q. What materials should I take to the test?

A. Be sure to take with you your admission ticket, some form of photo and signature identification, several sharpened number 2 pencils with good erasers, and a watch to help pace yourself during the test. You may also want to dress in a way that you can adapt to the temperature of the room. No scratch paper, books, or other aids will be permitted in the exam center.

Q. Should I guess on the test?

A. YES! There is no penalty for guessing, so guess if you have to. On the multiple-choice section, first try to eliminate some of the choices to increase your chances of choosing the right answer. But do not leave any of the answer spaces blank.

Q. What, generally, are the questions like?

A. The multiple-choice questions will be based on best practices (what you learned in your university courses, not *always* what you have seen in public schools). Typically, one of the choices will be borderline ridiculous. The other three choices will be pretty good, but one of the three will be best—it will answer the question *exactly*, whereas the other two may not address the question thoroughly. This idea will be addressed later in this introduction.

Q. How long does it take to get my scores back?

A. ETS usually gets your scores to you in four to six weeks.

Q. Are there any modifications available to test takers?

A. Yes. Test takers with disabilities and those whose primary language is not English may apply for test-taking modifications. More information is available at www.ets.org/praxis or in the Praxis series registration booklet.

Q. What's the best way to prepare for the Social Studies Content Knowledge Test?

A. You're doing it! Become familiar with the format of the test, the types of questions, and the content of the test. After you're familiar with what will be on the test, it's best to complete the two practice tests in this book. Go back and review the specific content if you answer a question incorrectly, and then analyze why the right answer is the right answer and the wrong answers are the wrong answers.

Test-Taking Tips

Once you have studied the subject areas and taken the practice tests in this book, and then reviewed necessary content, you should be ready to take the test. Here are some tips for your last-minute preparation:

- Make sure you know where you will be going to take your test, and know how long it will take to get there. Allow yourself plenty of driving time.
- Get a good night's sleep the night before the test.
- Eat a balanced breakfast the morning of the test.
- Take plenty of sharpened number 2 pencils with good erasers.
- Dress in layers in case you get hot or cold in the exam room.
- Bring along some mints or gum to enliven you during the test if need be.
- Once you have been given your test, begin to work. Try to avoid getting too bogged down in any one question. Remember the way the Praxis is written. Make sure you choose the answer that *best fits* the question.

How to Approach the Multiple-Choice Questions

In the Social Studies Praxis, there are 130 multiple-choice questions, each with four answer choices. Answering multiple-choice questions is a skill, and the better you are at it, the better you will do on this test. There are some things about the Praxis test, though, that will help you answer the questions:

- Keep in mind that the test is based on “best practices” and “best answers.” So, remember the things you have been taught in your content areas and your preparatory classes to become a teacher. As you’re deciding on your answers to the multiple-choice question, refer to the question and make sure your answer correlates to the question.
- Remember that often all four answer choices, if looked at independently of the question, may seem like best practices. You must refer back to the question and see which answers tie in with the question. Read and reread the question.
- Once you have read the question, try to formulate an answer in your head before you even look at the answer choices. Then see if one of the answer choices matches your answer. If you know the answer, of course, finding the correct answer will be easy.
- If, when you read the question, you are unable to formulate an answer, look at the answer choices. If you know the material *fairly* well, the correct answer will probably be clear to you. If it is not immediately clear to you, a little thought and reflection may sift out the right answer.

In many cases you can use the process of elimination to answer a question correctly. This process involves eliminating the wrong answers so that you’re left with the correct one, or at least you’ve narrowed down the answer choices. Multiple-choice tests like the Praxis follow patterns in their answer choices. There is the correct answer, and then there are “distracters.” Usually, there is one choice that is completely incorrect—almost laughable—and you can quickly eliminate that choice. Then there will be two choices that are pretty good choices, but not the *best* answer for that particular question, and there may be clues in the answers that make them incorrect. The question setup may be something like this:

1. Question
 - A. Totally incorrect choice
 - B. Almost but not quite correct
 - C. Correct choice
 - D. Good, best-practices answer, but doesn’t address the question

Look for giveaway words such as *always*, *never*, or *not*. Most things in the world are not *always* or *never*, and you should be careful if a question asks, “Which of the following is NOT ...”

By using the process of elimination, you increase your chances of getting the right answer. Remember that you are not penalized for incorrect answers on the test, so it’s worth taking a chance. What this means is that if you just guess, you have a one in four chance—25 percent—of guessing correctly. But if you are able to eliminate one of the choices because it was so wrong, it made you laugh, you have a one in three chance of selecting the correct answer. That’s 33 percent—better odds than one in four! If you can narrow it down to only two choices, you have a 50–50 chance.

Different Types of Multiple-Choice Questions

Complete the Statement

In this type of question, you are given an incomplete statement, and you must choose the answer that makes the completed statement correct.

1. The legal basis for the escalation of United States involvement in the Vietnam War was the
 - A. declaration of war by Congress.
 - B. passage of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution by Congress.
 - C. United Nations' resolution condemning the North Vietnamese invasion of South Vietnam.
 - D. Mutual defense provisions of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Which of the Following...

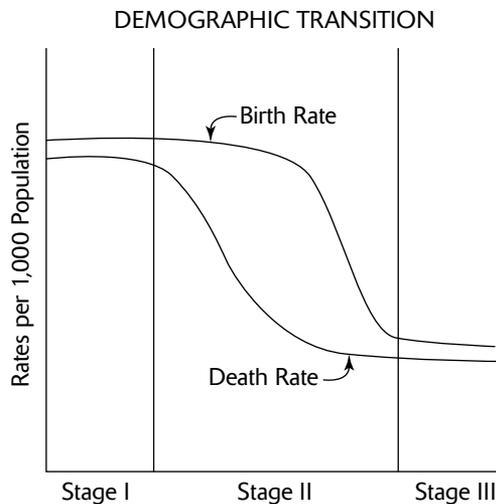
The best way to answer this type of question is to replace “which of the following” with the words in the answer choices and figure out which “fits” the best.

1. In which of the following fields did Islamic civilization most influence Europeans at the time of the Crusades?
 - A. Music
 - B. Theology
 - C. Mathematics
 - D. Law

Roman Numeral Choices

In this format, more than one correct answer is in the list, and you must select the answer choice that includes the two correct answers.

1. The following graph indicates that rapid population growth is most likely to occur in

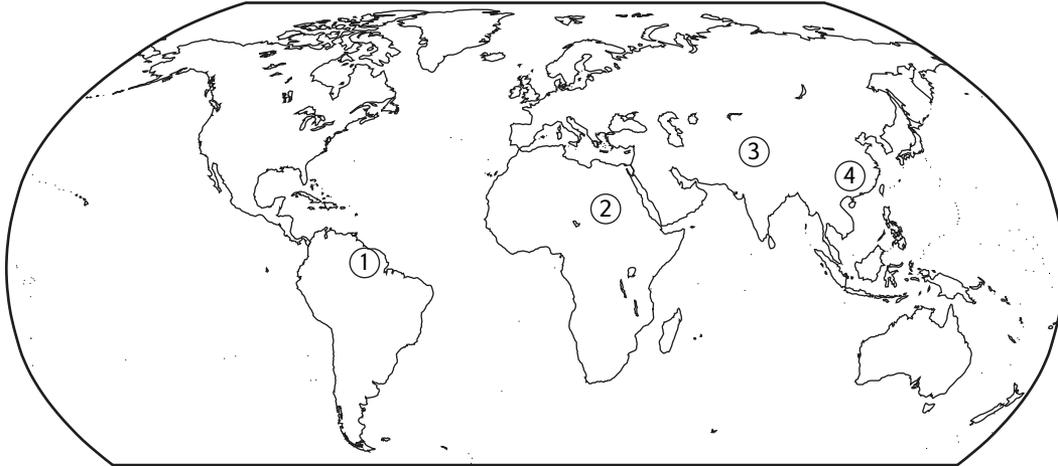


- A. stage I only.
- B. stage II only.
- C. stages I and III only.
- D. stages II and III only.

Questions Containing “NOT,” “LEAST,” or “EXCEPT”

In this type of question, you must select the answer that does *not* fit. Be careful with this type of question—it is easy to forget that you are selecting the *exception*. Always refer to the question.

1. On the following map, which number indicates a region that was NOT a center of early urban civilization?



- A. 1
- B. 2
- C. 3
- D. 4

Questions About Graphs, Tables, or Reading Passages

In questions about graphs, tables, or reading passages, you should provide only the information that is asked for in that question. You may want to read the questions first and then look at the map or graph. Again, always refer to the question.

Practice the Multiple-Choice Questions

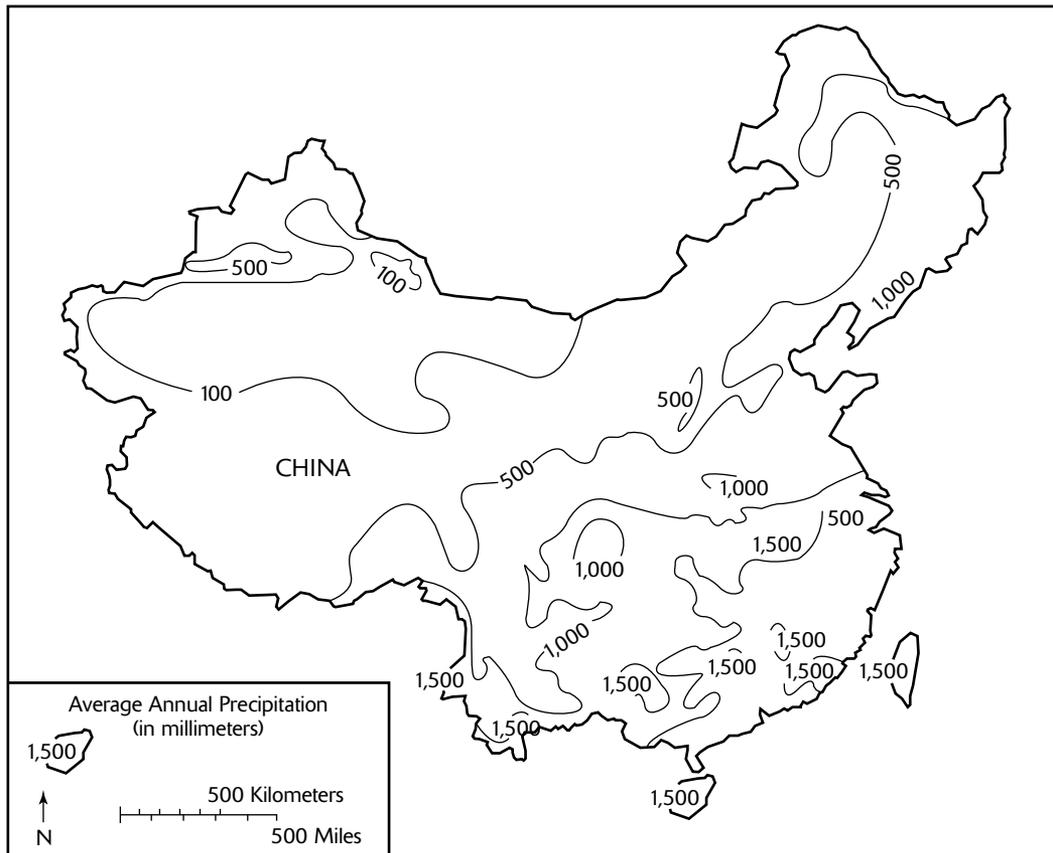
For ease, we will use the previous questions along with some additional questions. Use these practice questions to become familiar with the various types of multiple-choice questions. The answer explanations follow the questions.

1. President Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation declared free only those slaves who
 - A. were living in the areas still in rebellion.
 - B. were serving in the Union armies.
 - C. were living in the border states.
 - D. had escaped to Northern states.

2. The legal basis for the escalation for United States involvement in the Vietnam War was the
 - A. declaration of war by Congress.
 - B. passage of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution by Congress.
 - C. United Nations’ resolution condemning the North Vietnamese invasion of South Vietnam.
 - D. mutual defense provisions of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

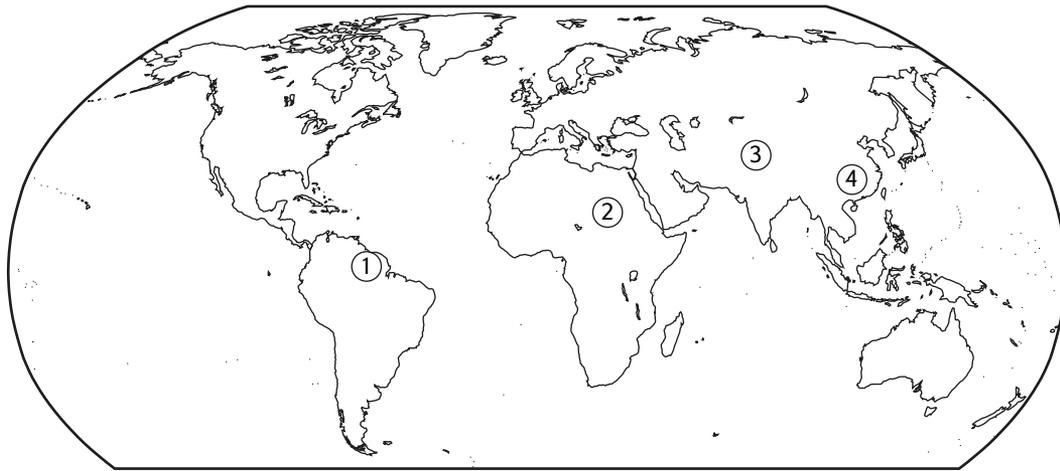
- 3.** In which of the following fields did Islamic civilization most influence Europeans at the time of the Crusades?
- A. Music
 - B. Theology
 - C. Mathematics
 - D. Law
- 4.** The term “Cold War” refers to the
- A. race between the United States and the Soviet Union to claim ownership of Antarctica.
 - B. contest between the United States and the European Common Market for economic domination in the West.
 - C. struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union to gain political hegemony in world affairs.
 - D. competition between the Soviet Union and China for the resources of the Pacific Rim.
- 5.** With which of the following statements would both Thomas Hobbes and John Locke probably have agreed?
- A. Government exists as a contract between the ruler and the ruled.
 - B. Government must enforce religious law to prevent moral decay.
 - C. Government must enforce the majority’s will regardless of the wishes of the minority.
 - D. Government must bend to the will of the educated minority.
- 6.** Which of the following is an example of a concurrent power?
- A. The printing and coining of money
 - B. The power to declare war
 - C. The process of naturalization
 - D. The levying of taxes
- 7.** According to Erik Erikson, the primary dilemma faced in adolescence is
- A. industry vs. inferiority.
 - B. identity vs. identity confusion.
 - C. generativity vs. stagnation.
 - D. integrity vs. despair.

8. The following map shows which of the following to be true about precipitation in China?



- A. The North receives more precipitation than the South.
 - B. The driest region is the Northeast.
 - C. The Southeast receives the most precipitation.
 - D. The West receives more precipitation than the East.
9. If the tax rate for a single person with \$25,000 in taxable income is 24 percent, and the tax rate for a single person with \$20,000 in taxable income is 20 percent, the tax rate over this income range is
- A. regressive.
 - B. progressive.
 - C. proportional.
 - D. revenue-neutral.

10. On the following map, which number indicates a region that was NOT a center of early urban civilization?

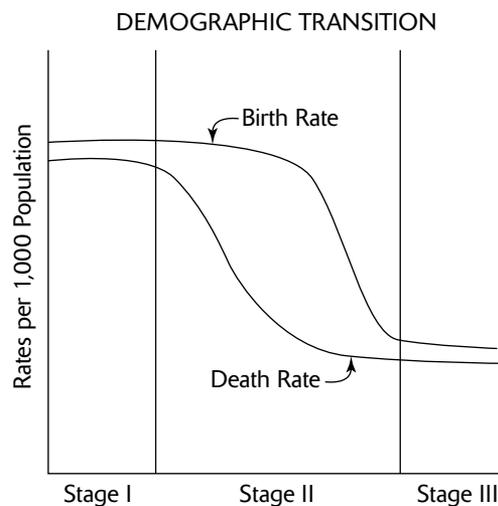


- A. 1
- B. 2
- C. 3
- D. 4

11. Which of the following people would benefit most if the value of the United States dollar increased relative to the Japanese yen?

- A. A United States car dealer importing Japanese cars
- B. A Japanese tourist vacationing in the United States
- C. A worker in the United States beer industry
- D. A Japanese baker buying United States wheat

12. The following graph below indicates that rapid population growth is most likely to occur in



- A. stage I only.
- B. stage II only.
- C. stages I and III only.
- D. stages II and III only.

Answer Explanations

- 1. A.** The Emancipation Proclamation freed only those slaves who were living in the states or parts of states still in rebellion. Lincoln feared that complete emancipation would cost the Union the loyalty of the border states (Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, and Delaware), slave states that remained loyal to the Union. Moreover, Lincoln did not believe he had the constitutional authority to declare free those slaves living in areas loyal to the Union.
- 2. B.** There was no declaration of war by Congress. However, Congress did pass the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which authorized the president to “take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression.”
- 3. C.** At the time of the Crusades, when contact increased between Europe and the Islamic world, Islamic mathematicians were using sophisticated mathematical tools and concepts (algebra, zero, Arabic numerals) that were unfamiliar to Europeans. In the twelfth century, European scholars became more aware of and interested in the contributions of Islamic mathematicians, and they made this knowledge available to the West in Latin translations.
- 4. C.** The term “Cold War” is used to describe the tense relationship that developed between the United States and the Soviet Union in the years immediately following World War II. During the Cold War, both the United States and the Soviet Union sought to extend their economic, diplomatic, and, at times, military influence in many parts of the world. Beginning in the late 1980s, dramatic changes in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe led to a reduction in U.S.-Soviet tension and the end of the Cold War.
- 5. A.** Hobbes and Locke both agreed that a contract existed between the governed and those governing, although their views on the nature of the contract differed.
- 6. D.** A concurrent power is a power shared by the federal and state governments. Both the federal and state governments have the power to levy taxes. The powers described in choices A, B, and C are reserved for the federal government alone.
- 7. B.** Erikson stated that an adolescent needs to integrate previous experiences in order to develop a sense of “ego identity.”
- 8. C.** The map shows that the greatest amount of precipitation (1,500 millimeters on average) is in southeast China, compared to other areas that receive far less precipitation (less than 500 millimeters on average).
- 9. B.** A progressive tax rate is one in which the tax rate increases as income rises. In this example, someone earning \$25,000 a year is taxed at a higher rate than someone earning a lower income; thus, the tax rate is progressive.
- 10. A.** Early city civilizations developed along the Nile River, the Sindhu (Indus) River, and the Tangtze, but not along the Amazon.
- 11. A.** Appreciation in the value of the dollar results in a decline in the relative cost of importing foreign goods. An importer of foreign goods would thus benefit. U.S. goods would be relatively more expensive, so choices B and D are incorrect. C is also incorrect; a change in the value of the dollar would have no beneficial effect on a worker in the U.S. beer industry.
- 12. B.** In stages I and III, birth and death rates are approximately equal. Therefore, the rate of natural increase (population growth) would be quite low, even in the first stage in which the birth rate is high. In stage II, a decline in the death rate precedes a decline in the birth rate. It is in this middle stage that rapid and dramatic population growth would occur.