



ALABAMA

CERTIFICATION

The Teacher Education and Certification Section of the Alabama Department of Education is responsible for regulating the teacher education programs as adopted by the State Board of Education. Alabama offers Class B certificates (bachelor's degree), A certificates (master's degree), and AA certificates (sixth-year level). By pursuing the following options, individuals in Alabama who hold a baccalaureate or higher degree may become certified.

- ❖ Alabama Approved Program Approach—completion of a state-approved teacher education program.
- ❖ Reciprocal Agreements—completion of out-of-state teacher education program at an NCATE-approved institution and compliance with the NASDTEC contract.
- ❖ Other Approaches—alternative approval as granted by the Teacher Education and Certification Office.
- ❖ Alternative, Emergency, Interim, Preliminary, and Professional categories exist.

Elementary, Middle, and Secondary Certification

Knowledge requirements are listed, but no specific course hours are provided. The knowledge described at the elementary level pertains to general knowledge that would enable the teacher to “plan and provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum” for students in the elementary grades based on the courses of study outlined for different subjects by the state. A similar description exists for middle school teachers. At the secondary level, teachers are to prepare for either a comprehensive teaching field in the general social sciences or one or more single teaching fields in a secondary subject area. Secondary teachers of history must have knowledge of:

- ❖ the origin and historical development of contemporary United States, other Western, and non-Western cultures in a chronological and spatial setting;
- ❖ the interrelationship of economic, political, social, psychological, and technological forces in the shaping of societies and cultures;
- ❖ historical themes concerning the origin and evolution of Western civilization, including evolution of political institutions, religious movements, and population displacement;
- ❖ historical themes concerning the origin and evolution of the United States, including constitutional government, immigration, America, and the world;
- ❖ historical themes concerning the origin and evolution of the state and region, including economic change, social and political conflict and change, role of the state in regional interdependence; and
- ❖ historical themes concerning the origin and evolution of non-Western civilization, including patterns of social and political development, cultural diffusion, conflict, and cooperation.

STANDARDS

Standards for Teachers

Alabama has standards for initial entry for teachers and general standards for all educators. Standards related generally to social science and specifically to history instruction can be found under “Program Approval Standards” for teacher education on Alabama’s web page.

Standards for Students

The Alabama Course of Study: Social Studies is designed as an integrated study of the social sciences and humanities. Alabama modeled its course of study on documents published by the National Council for History Education, the National Standards for Civics and Government, Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, the Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics, and the National Geography Standards.

History and geography are the central disciplines in the Course of Study. Four program goals—Historic Literacy, Geographic Literacy, Economic Literacy, and Political Literacy—are promoted by a study of the two central disciplines (history and geography) and economics, law, and U.S. government. Civic responsibility is the final outcome sought by the Course of Study.

At all grade levels students encounter the Program Goals. During the early grades students encounter the goals through a study of themselves and their local environment. Third graders learn about the settlement and use of land. In fourth grade Alabama students learn Alabama history. The study of history continues as students learn U.S. and world history in two-year sequences through grade 11. Seventh graders study civics and consumer economics in addition to geography, and in the 12th grade students take courses in government and economics.

In a section on position statements in the Course of Study, Alabama educators explain that the Course of Study in social studies emphasizes the importance of primary sources, literature, multicultural and/or global perspectives, service learning, knowledge of current events, and technology. Alabama students complete the following Course of Study in Social Studies.

- ❖ Kindergarten—Citizenship: Living in My World
- ❖ First Grade—History and Geography: Exploring My World
- ❖ Second Grade—Interdependence: Making a Difference
- ❖ Third Grade—The Land and Its People
- ❖ Fourth Grade—Alabama History and Geography
- ❖ Fifth Grade—United States Studies: Beginnings to 1900
- ❖ Sixth Grade—United States Studies: 1900 to the Present
- ❖ Seventh Grade—Citizenship and World Geography
- ❖ Eighth Grade—World History and Geography to 1500
- ❖ Ninth Grade—World History and Geography since 1500
- ❖ Tenth Grade—United States History and Geography: Beginnings to 1900
- ❖ Eleventh Grade—United States History and Geography: 1900 to the Present
- ❖ Twelfth Grade—American Government; Principles of Economics

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION/EXIT EXAM

In order to graduate from high school in Alabama, students are required to complete four credits in social studies. These credits include:

- ❖ world history and geography, 1 credit;
- ❖ U.S. history and geography, 2 credits;
- ❖ economics, ½ credit; and
- ❖ government, ½ credit.

Exit Exam

Students in Alabama take the Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE) Third Edition as an exit exam. The test is administered as a pre-examination to 10th graders during the spring semester. If a student passes the pre-exam, he/she is given credit for passing the AHSGE. If the student fails the pre-exam, he/she will take the actual assessment during the spring semester of the 11th grade. Students can continue to take the exam at regularly scheduled intervals until they pass all sections. Once a student successfully passes a section, he/she need not repeat that section. Students can return to school for remediation until they turn 21, and they can take the exam an unlimited number of times.

Standards and Objectives Committees recommended the standards and objectives that should be used for reading comprehension, language, mathematics, science, and social studies on this exam. They based these recommendations on the course of study used in each subject area and on the *Standards and Objectives (Social Studies) for Alabama High School Graduation Exam*, Bulletin 1998, No. 13.

According to a brochure, the class of 2004 is the first group of students scheduled to take the social studies subject-area test as part of the AHSGE. There are 100 questions on the social studies test, and it is written at the 11th grade level. The content included on the exam relates to:

- ❖ global influence of the pre-colonial and colonial eras of the Western Hemisphere;
- ❖ formation and development of the United States;
- ❖ eras of revolution, expansion, and reform prior to the United States Civil War;
- ❖ United States Civil War era;
- ❖ developments of the late 19th to the early 20th centuries;
- ❖ causes and effects of World War I; and
- ❖ Great Depression and World War II.

Alabama history has been incorporated into the U.S. History Course of Study, so it is eligible content for the exit exam. An information sheet also indicates that even though the eligible content ends at World War II, all other content found in the Course of Study could appear on the exam.

The state of Alabama provides students with item specifications for social studies with examples provided online.

ASSESSMENT

The Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGA) and the *Stanford Achievement Test*, Tenth Edition, Stanford 10 serve as the assessment tests at the state level. The Department of Education has put together Course of Study Assessment Correlations for each grade, K–12. These correlations illustrate the ways in which the course of study content standards embody both *Alabama High School Graduation Exam* and Stanford 10 objectives.

According to a May 2002 report submitted by a Test Advisory Committee to the State Board of Education, assessments in social studies will take place at grades 6 (criterion- and norm-referenced), 10 (criterion-referenced), and 11 (criterion-referenced). The 6th grade social studies CRT is slated to begin in the 2007–08 school year. Sixth graders were scheduled to take a NRT in 2002 school year. Alabama also participates in the NAEP exam.