



FLORIDA

CERTIFICATION

The state of Florida issues two main types of teaching certificates. The professional certificate is the standard or highest certificate. It is valid for five years and may be renewed. If individuals do not qualify for the professional certificate but meet criteria to demonstrate subject content mastery, they can qualify for a temporary certificate. Temporary certificates are nonrenewable and are valid for three years. Florida does not issue emergency certificates.

Elementary Certification

Certification for elementary education requires one of the following options:

- ❖ bachelor's degree or higher with an undergraduate or graduate major in elementary education including teaching reading at the elementary or primary level; or
- ❖ bachelor's degree or higher with 24 semester hours in elementary education including multiple qualifications in elementary methods and subjects. Specifically 3 hours in methods and materials for teaching reading and 21 hours elementary education are required. A portion (unspecified) must include credit in social studies for the elementary school, which may include introductory geography and conservation.

The above requirements are for academic class certification for grades 1–6. Certification for grades K–6 requires 30 hours of elementary education, but the specifications for content and methods for teaching social studies do not change.

Middle-Level Certification

Certification at the middle school level enables teachers to teach social science in grades 5–9. Requirements include

- ❖ bachelor's or higher degree with an undergraduate or graduate major in social science, middle grades social science, or middle grades social studies; or

- ❖ bachelor's degree or higher with 18 semester hours in social science or social studies to include the areas specified below:
 1. Six hours in U.S. history;
 2. credit in Western civilization; or European, Asian, African, Latin American, or Middle Eastern history;
 3. credit in economics;
 4. credit in U.S. government; and
 5. credit in geography.

Secondary Certification

As of July 1, 2003, Florida will certify teachers in social science (grades 6–12). Separate certification in the individual social studies disciplines will no longer exist. Requirements for certification in the field of social science include

- ❖ bachelor's or higher degree with a major in social science, social studies, history, political science, geography, sociology, economics, or psychology; or
- ❖ bachelor's degree or higher with 30 semester hours in social science or social studies in the areas specified below:
 1. Six hours in U.S. history;
 2. courses in Western civilization or European history;
 3. courses in Asian, African, Latin American, or Middle Eastern history;
 4. courses in economics;
 5. courses in U.S. federal government;
 6. courses in geography; and
 7. courses in either psychology or sociology.

Passing the subject certification test is required to achieve full certification.

STANDARDS

Standards for Teachers

Florida has designated Educator Accomplished Practices for its teachers. The state has identified 12 essential practices of teaching. Accomplished Practice Eight addresses knowledge of subject matter. No specific content standards for teachers related to social studies or history have been located.

Standards for Students

Florida's 1996 Sunshine State Standards were written in seven subject areas. Each area is divided into four grade clusters (pre-K–2, 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12). The standards address both content and performance. In language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, the Sunshine State Standards also include grade level expectations. These grade level expectations are not intended to take place of a school's curriculum guide. Instead, they are to serve as the basis for curriculum development at the local level. The grade-level expectations provide examples of what students should "know" and "understand" at each of the benchmarks

under the standards at the appropriate grade level. The following are Sunshine State Standards for social studies.

- ❖ Time, Continuity, and Change [history]
- ❖ People, Places, and Environments [geography]
- ❖ Government and the Citizen [civics and government]
- ❖ Economics

In history, the standards include the following.

- ❖ Standard 1: The student understands historical chronology and the historical perspective.
- ❖ Standard 2: The student understands the world from its beginnings to the time of the Renaissance.
- ❖ Standard 3: The student understands Western and Eastern civilization since the Renaissance.
- ❖ Standard 4: The student understands U.S. history to 1880.
- ❖ Standard 5: The student understands U.S. history from 1880 to the present day.
- ❖ Standard 6: The student understands the history of Florida and its people (not included in pre-K–2 cluster or the 9–12 cluster).

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION/EXIT EXAM

Florida students are required to pass 24 credits in order to receive a high school diploma. Of these 24 credits, three must include

- ❖ American history—1 credit;
- ❖ world history—1 credit (this course shall include a comparative study of the history, doctrines, and objectives of all major political systems);
- ❖ economics— $\frac{1}{2}$ credit; and
- ❖ American government— $\frac{1}{2}$ credit.

Exit Exam

Since 1994, Florida students have been required to pass the HSCT (High School Competency Test) in order to graduate from high school. This exam tests students in communications and mathematics. Beginning with the class of 2003, students are required to pass the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test). See below for a description of the FCAT.

ASSESSMENT

The FCAT assesses student achievement in the Sunshine State Standards in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics. Portions of the FCAT are norm-referenced as well. All students take FCAT assessments. No assessments are required in social studies or history.

