



TENNESSEE

CERTIFICATION

According to its Title II report, Tennessee offers Type A and Type B certification for teachers. Apprentice licenses are issued to candidates who have completed an approved teacher education program. Apprentice Licenses are valid for five years, but once an educator has taught for three years with an apprentice license it is no longer valid. The educator must then submit evidence supporting his/her advancement to the professional license. NCATE requirements are followed by the state. The courses in content have a general outline they must address. Each college's interpretation of these requirements varies in the area of hours. The state requires at least courses in American and world history, but each school decides the specifics. Each college in Tennessee defines its own program, and no state minimums exist. Teachers are certified in eight subject areas. A three-tier system exists with licensure.

Elementary Certification

No specific social studies requirements exist for elementary. K–8 certification.

Middle-Level Certification

No specific course requirements have been located at this point.

Secondary Certification

No specific course requirements have been located at this point.

STANDARDS

Standards for Teachers

The Tennessee State Board of Education has adopted licensure standards for all prospective teachers. These standards are based on the INTASC model. Since the adoption of those standards, the Board approved a transition plan that has

aligned the state programs with the performance-based requirements of NCATE accreditation. There are 11 standards for teachers. The first standard, Discipline Taught, emphasizes the importance of content knowledge. No specific content standards for history/social studies have been located.

Standards for Students

Tennessee’s Social Studies Curriculum Standards include process standards, content standards, learning expectations, and accomplishments for grades K–8 social studies, American history, world history, world geography, government, civics, sociology, economics, and psychology. Four process standards and six content standards are designed to be taught in an integrated fashion.

❖ Process

1. Communication
2. Data Analysis
3. Historical Awareness
4. Acquiring Information

❖ Content

1. Culture
2. Economics
3. Geography
4. Government and Civics
5. History
6. Individuals, Groups, and Interactions

Learning expectations are provided for each of the six standards in order to define a broad foundation of learning. Accomplishments specific for different grade levels identify what students are expected to know and be able to do at different points in their academic experiences. Learning expectations and accomplishments are designed within each grade level. According to the online document, benchmarks occur at grades 3, 5, and 8, but according to a Tennessee representative benchmarks now occur every year. Parts of the standards that will be assessed by the state are noted in the benchmarks, and indicators (Level 1—Below Proficient, Level 2—Proficient, and Level 3—Advanced) are also included.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION/EXIT EXAM

Twenty credit units are required for graduation in the state of Tennessee. Students can pursue either a university track or technical training. The state has established a policy in which “the social studies curriculum will be consistent with national goals and with admissions requirements of Tennessee public institutions of higher education; will include the study of United States history, world history/geography, economics, and government; and will incorporate a global perspective.” Three units are required in social studies. They specifically include the following:

- ❖ One unit United States history;
- ❖ One unit world geography or world history;
- ❖ One-half unit government; and
- ❖ One-half unit economics.

Exit Exam

All students must pass end-of-course examinations in Algebra I, Biology, and English II (Gateway Tests) in order to earn a diploma. An end-of-course examination will be administered in U.S. history, but a passing score is not required for graduation.

ASSESSMENT

The Evaluation and Assessment Division in the Tennessee Department of Education administers the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP). The TCAP includes a Writing Test, a Competency Test, an elementary Achievement Test, the Gateway Tests, and End-of-Course Tests. As of February 2003, the Writing Test occurs in grades 5, 8, and 11. The Competence Test is a former graduation requirement and is being phased out and replaced with the Gateway Tests (see above section on exit exams). The Achievement Test is taken in grades 3–8 and provides norm-referenced information and performance information by objective. Five levels of performance have been developed for this test, including Step 1, Progressing, Nearing Proficiency, Proficient, and Advanced. Students are tested in social studies as part of this exam, and by 2003–04 criterion-referenced items in social studies are expected to be added. End-of-course examinations are administered in 10 subjects. U.S. history is included in the end-of-course examinations. The outcomes of these tests are figured as a percentage of students' course grades. According to an implementation timeline, the U.S. history end-of-course examination has been postponed.

