

CLEP® Social Sciences and History: at a Glance

Description of the Examination

The Social Sciences and History examination covers a wide range of topics from the social sciences and history disciplines. While the exam is based on no specific course, its content is drawn from introductory college courses that cover United States history, Western civilization, world history, government/political science, geography, sociology, economics, psychology, and anthropology. The primary objective of the exam is to give candidates the opportunity to demonstrate that they possess the level of knowledge and understanding expected of college students who meet a distribution or general education requirement in the social sciences/history areas.

The Social Sciences and History examination contains approximately 120 questions to be answered in 90 minutes. Some of them are pretest questions that will not be scored. Any time candidates spend on tutorials and providing personal information is in addition to the actual testing time.

Note: This examination uses 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).

Knowledge and Skills Required

The Social Sciences and History examination requires candidates to demonstrate one or more of the following:

- Familiarity with terminology, facts, conventions, methodology, concepts, principles, generalizations, and theories
- Ability to understand, interpret, and analyze graphic, pictorial, and written material
- Ability to apply abstractions to particulars and to apply hypotheses, concepts, theories, and principles to given data

The content of the exam is drawn from the following disciplines. The percentages next to the main disciplines indicate the approximate percentage of exam questions on that topic.

40% History

Requires general knowledge and understanding of time- and place-specific human experiences. Topics covered include political, diplomatic, social, economic, intellectual, and cultural material. Areas include:

- **United States History (17%)**

Covers the colonial period, the American Revolution, the early republic, the Civil War and Reconstruction, industrialization, the Progressive Era, the First World War, the 1920s, the Great Depression and the New Deal, the Second World War, the 1950s, the Cold War, social conflict — the 1960s and 1970s, and the late 20th century.

- **Western Civilization (15%)**

Covers ancient Western Asia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, as well as medieval Europe and modern Europe, including its expansion and outposts in other parts of the world; its imperial contraction and new economic and political forms

- **World History (8%)**

Covers Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America from prehistory to the present, focusing on global themes and interactions

13% Government/Political Science, including

- Comparative politics
- International relations
- Methods
- United States
 - » Civil rights and liberties
 - » Constitution and its interpretation
 - » Institutions
 - » Parties, interest groups, and media
 - » Voting and political behavior

11% Geography, including

- Key geographical skills
- Cultural geography
- Physical geography
- Population
- Regional geography
- Rural and urban land use
- Spatial interaction

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10% Economics, including

- Economic measurements
- International trade
- Major theorists and schools
- Monetary and fiscal policy
- Product markets
- Resource markets
- Scarcity, choice, and cost

10% Psychology, including

- Abnormal psychology
- Biopsychology
- Cognitive psychology, learning, and memory
- Developmental psychology
- Major theorists and schools
- Methods and statistics
- Personality
- Social psychology
 - » Aggression
 - » Conformity
 - » Group process
 - » Socialization

10% Sociology, including

- Demography
- Deviance
- Family
- Interaction
- Major theorists and schools
- Methods
- Social change
- Social organization
- Social stratification
- Social theory

6% Anthropology, including

- Cultural anthropology
- Ethnography
- Major theorists and schools
- Methods
- The human past

Study Resources

Most of the textbooks used in college-level social sciences and history courses cover the topics in the outline given earlier, but the approaches to certain topics and the emphases given to them may differ. To prepare for the Social Sciences and History exam, it is advisable to study one or more college textbooks on United States and world history, sociology, Western civilization, and other related courses, which can be found in most college bookstores.

The materials suggested for preparing for other CLEP® exams may also be helpful. Study resources for the American Government, History of the United States I and II, Principles of Macroeconomics and Principles of Microeconomics, Introductory Psychology, Introductory Sociology, and Western Civilization I and II exams are particularly relevant and can be found in the Study Resources section of the *CLEP Official Study Guide* for these exams. HINT: When selecting a textbook, check the table of contents against the knowledge and skills required for the relevant section of this test.

Visit clep.collegeboard.org/test-preparation for additional social sciences and history resources. You can also find suggestions for exam preparation in Chapter IV of the *CLEP Official Study Guide*. In addition, many college faculty post their course materials on their schools' websites.

Sample Test Questions

The following sample questions do not appear on an actual CLEP examination. They are intended to give potential test-takers an indication of the format and difficulty level of the examination and to provide content for practice and review. For more sample questions and info about the test, see the *CLEP Official Study Guide*.

1. The Missouri Compromise in 1820, the Compromise Tariff of 1833, and the Compromise of 1850 were all crafted by which of the following?
 - A. John Quincy Adams
 - B. Henry Clay
 - C. James K. Polk
 - D. Stephen Douglas
 - E. John C. Calhoun

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2. Which of the following statements describes the importance of congressional passage of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution?
 - A. It condemned Communist Party activity in South Vietnam.
 - B. It marked the beginning of the United States commitment to withdraw troops from South Vietnam.
 - C. It authorized President Johnson to take all necessary steps to repel armed attacks on United States forces.
 - D. It outlawed antiwar demonstrations in the United States.
 - E. It restricted the powers given to the United States president by the Constitution.
3. Buddhism's spread to China resulted in
 - A. a challenge to the Confucian view of women
 - B. support for greater political involvement
 - C. a weakening of the Chinese monastic movement
 - D. greater unity under strong emperors
 - E. closer ties with Japan
4. Which of the following was a result of the 18th-century Atlantic slave trade?
 - A. Stimulation of European capitalism
 - B. Industrialization of West Africa
 - C. Decrease in the trade between Europe and North America
 - D. Increase in amount of gold and silver shipped to Spain
 - E. Equal numbers of male and female slaves in the Americas
5. Missouri has 11 electoral votes. The Democratic candidate received 50.01 percent of the popular vote for president and the Republican candidate received 49.99 percent.

How would Missouri's electoral vote be apportioned between the two candidates?

 - A. The Democratic candidate would receive six electoral votes, and the Republican candidate would receive five.
 - B. Each candidate would receive five and a half electoral votes.
 - C. The Democratic candidate would receive all 11 electoral votes.
 - D. The Democratic candidate would receive the state's two at-large electoral votes, and the remaining nine electoral votes would be allocated according to the popular vote.
 - E. The election would be thrown into the Missouri House of Representatives.
6. The "Green Revolution" was a term used in the 1960s to describe programs designed to
 - A. achieve zero population growth worldwide
 - B. establish belts of open space around the world's major cities
 - C. control the rate of deforestation in the tropics
 - D. increase environmental awareness in industrialized nations
 - E. increase food production to meet world population growth
7. Which of the following is the most commonly used single measure of the overall output of the United States economy?
 - A. Consumer spending
 - B. Wholesale price index
 - C. Gross domestic product
 - D. Balance of trade
 - E. Total tax collections
8. The view of personality that emphasizes the presence of a collective unconscious containing archetypes was proposed by
 - A. Alfred Adler
 - B. Erik Erikson
 - C. Sigmund Freud
 - D. Carl Jung
 - E. Abraham Maslow

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9. Choice of a marriage partner is
 - A. primarily an individual, personal decision
 - B. largely influenced by a falling-in-love experience
 - C. nearly always based on endogamy
 - D. limited by religious approval
 - E. impacted by societal expectations and opportunities

10. The religious traditions of Judaism and Islam forbid the eating of pork. According to the cultural materialism approach of the anthropologist Marvin Harris, this can be seen as
 - A. a cultural tradition that unites populations practicing it
 - B. the effect of a human psychological aversion to eating omnivorous animals
 - C. the result of the fact that pigs were costly to raise in the hot, dry climate of the Middle East
 - D. a way for the followers of these religions to differentiate themselves from Christians and Buddhists
 - E. proof that eating pigs is unhealthy for humans

Credit Recommendations

The American Council on Education has recommended that colleges grant six credits for a score of 50, which is equivalent to a course grade of C, on the CLEP Social Sciences and History exam. Each college, however, is responsible for setting its own policy. For candidates with satisfactory scores on the Social Sciences and History examination, colleges may grant credit toward fulfillment of a distribution requirement, or for a particular course that matches the exam in content. Check with your school to find out the score it requires for granting credit, the number of credit hours granted, and the course that can be bypassed with a passing score.

Answers to Sample Questions: 1-B; 2-C; 3-A; 4-A; 5-C; 6-E; 7-C; 8-D; 9-E; 10-C