

CHAPTER 2

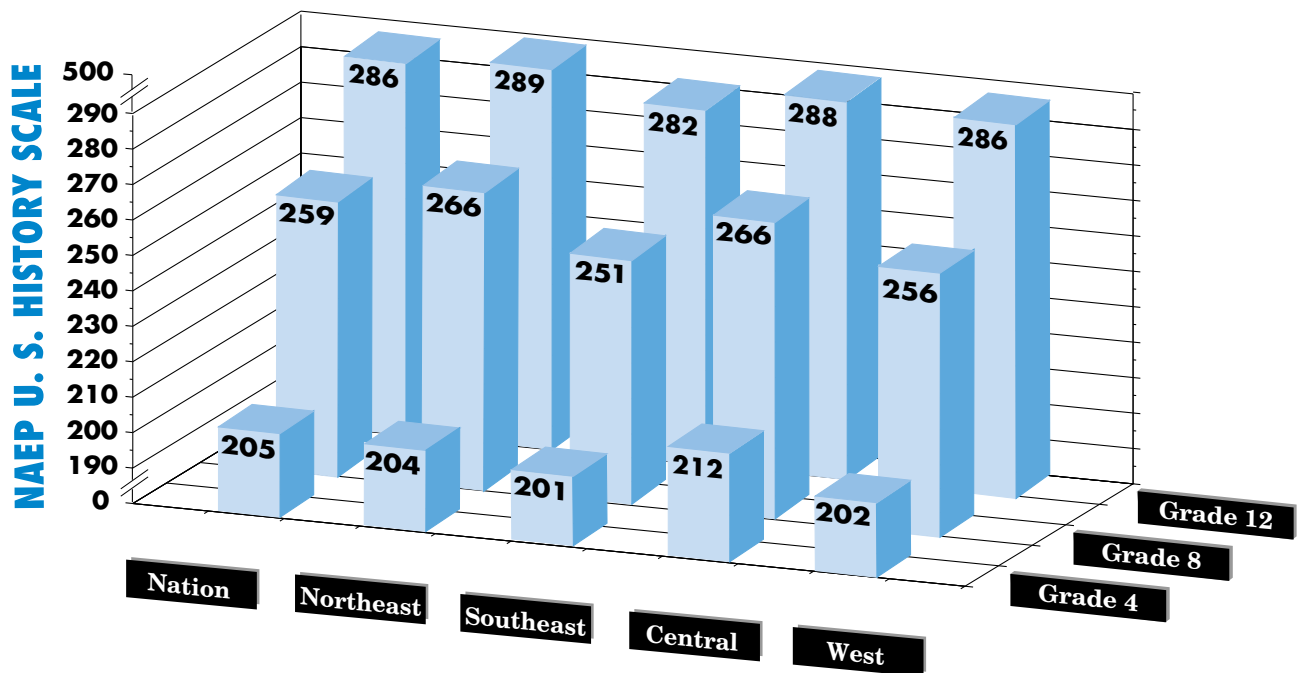
Average U.S. History Scores for the Nation and by Regions

A First Look at the Average U.S. History Scores of America's Students


This chapter reports the average NAEP U.S. history scale scores of students in grades 4, 8, and 12. Findings are presented for the nation, by region, and for major subgroups of students. (Appendix B contains sample questions and question-level results from the NAEP 1994 U.S. history assessment.) The differences in assessment performance discussed in this chapter are *statistically significant*. Other group and regional differences in U.S. history scores may exist, but they are not statistically significant.

Figure 2 and Table 2 present national and regional estimates of the average scores of fourth, eighth, and twelfth graders on the NAEP 1994 U.S. history assessment. Across the nation, the average scores were 205 for fourth graders, 259 for eighth graders, and 286 for twelfth graders. Among the various regions of the country, differences in NAEP U.S. history scale scores were observed. At grade 4, students in the Central region outperformed those in the Southeast and West. At grade 8, students in the Southeast had lower average scores than did students in all other regions. Eighth graders in the Northeast and Central regions also displayed higher average scores than did those in the West. Among high school seniors, students in the Southeast had lower average scores than did those in the Northeast and Central regions.

Figure 2. Average NAEP U.S. History Scores by Grade and by Region




SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1994 U.S. History Assessment.

TABLE 2 Average NAEP U.S. History Scores for the Nation and by Region		
THE NATION'S REPORT CARD  1994 U.S. History Assessment		
	Percentage of Students	Average Scale Score
Grade 4		
Nation	100	205
Region		
Northeast	22	204
Southeast	23	201
Central	25	212
West	30	202
Grade 8		
Nation	100	259
Region		
Northeast	20	266
Southeast	25	251
Central	24	266
West	31	256
Grade 12		
Nation	100	286
Region		
Northeast	20	289
Southeast	23	282
Central	27	288
West	30	286

The NAEP U.S. History scale ranges from 0 to 500.
 The standard errors for the national averages are between 0.6 and 1.0 scale score points.
 The standard errors for the regional averages range from 1.1 to 2.6 scale score points.
 SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1994 U.S. History Assessment.

higher than that of their Pacific Islander counterparts, the average score of the latter group was significantly higher than those of Black and Hispanic students.

For the American Indian student samples at grades 8 and 12 and the Pacific Islander student sample at grade 8, the nature of the samples does not allow accurate determination of the standard errors. For this reason, differences among these groups and other racial/ethnic groups are not discussed.

TABLE 3 Average NAEP U.S. History Scores by Race/Ethnicity		
THE NATION'S REPORT CARD  1994 U.S. History Assessment		
	Percentage of Students	Average Scale Score
Grade 4		
Nation	100	205
Race/Ethnicity		
White	69	215
Black	15	177
Hispanic	11	180
Asian	2	209
Pacific Islander	1	200
American Indian	2	190
Grade 8		
Nation	100	259
Race/Ethnicity		
White	69	267
Black	15	239
Hispanic	11	243
Asian	2	270
Pacific Islander	1 !	252 !
American Indian	1 !	246 !
Grade 12		
Nation	100	286
Race/Ethnicity		
White	74	292
Black	12	265
Hispanic	9	267
Asian	3	287
Pacific Islander	1	280
American Indian	1 !	279 !

The NAEP U.S. History scale ranges from 0 to 500.
 The standard errors for the national averages are between 0.6 and 1.0 scale score points.
 The standard errors for the race/ethnicity averages range from 0.8 to 7.1 scale score points.
 Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.
 ! Interpret with caution any comparisons involving this statistic. The nature of the sample does not allow for accurate determination of the variability of this value.
 SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1994 U.S. History Assessment.

Average NAEP U.S. History Scores by Major Reporting Subgroups

Tables 3 through 6 present average NAEP U.S. history scale scores for major subgroups of the fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-grade student populations.

Race/Ethnicity. Table 3 presents average U.S. history scores for racial/ethnic subgroups. The 1994 history assessment, like NAEP assessments in other subject areas, showed substantial variation in the average performance among the different racial/ethnic subgroups. At all three grades, White and Asian students had significantly higher scores, on average, than did Black and Hispanic students. In addition, at grade 4 the average scores of White students were higher than those of American Indian students. At grade 4, Pacific Islander students scored significantly higher than did Black and Hispanic students. Finally, at grade 12, while the average score of White students was

Gender. As can be seen in Table 4, the average NAEP U.S. history scores for males and females tends to be similar at grades 4 and 8 (i.e., differences are not significantly different). However, at grade 12 there is a significant difference, with the average score for males being higher than the average for females.

TABLE 4 Average NAEP U.S. History Scores by Gender		
	Percentage of Students	Average Scale Score
Grade 4		
Nation	100	205
Gender		
Male	50	203
Female	50	206
Grade 8		
Nation	100	259
Gender		
Male	50	259
Female	50	259
Grade 12		
Nation	100	286
Gender		
Male	50	288
Female	50	285
<small>The NAEP U.S. History scale ranges from 0 to 500. The standard errors for the national averages are between 0.6 and 1.0 scale score points. The standard errors for the gender averages range from 0.7 to 1.5 scale score points. SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1994 U.S. History Assessment.</small>		

Parents' Education Level. As shown in Table 5, the NAEP 1994 U.S. history results reveal a strong, positive relationship between students' reports of their parents' education level and students' achievement. It should be noted that at grade 4 — and, to a lesser extent, grade 8 — substantial numbers of students do not know how much education their parents received. Furthermore, the accuracy of student-reported data is open to some question¹. However, these caveats notwithstanding, the relationship between students' reports of their parents' education level and students' performance remains striking.

At all grades, students reporting given levels of parental education had a significantly higher average score than all students reporting lower levels of education. So, for example, students who reported that at least one parent had graduated from college displayed higher average scores than those who reported that at least one parent had some education after high school. The latter group in turn outperformed those who reported that at least one parent had graduated from high school. The sole exception to this pattern was at grade 4, where there was no statistically significant difference between students reporting that at least one parent was a college graduate and those reporting that at least one parent had received some education beyond high school.


TABLE 5 Average NAEP U.S. History Scores by Parents' Education Level		
	Percentage of Students	Average Scale Score
Grade 4		
Nation	100	205
Parents' Education Level		
Graduated from College	43	216
Some Education After High School	8	214
Graduated from High School	12	197
Did Not Finish High School	4	177
I Don't Know	34	195
Grade 8		
Nation	100	259
Parents' Education Level		
Graduated from College	42	270
Some Education After High School	19	264
Graduated from High School	23	251
Did Not Finish High School	7	241
I Don't Know	9	238
Grade 12		
Nation	100	286
Parents' Education Level		
Graduated from College	45	296
Some Education After High School	25	287
Graduated from High School	20	276
Did Not Finish High School	7	263
I Don't Know	3	256
<small>The NAEP U.S. History scale ranges from 0 to 500. The standard errors for the national averages are between 0.6 and 1.0 scale score points. The standard errors for the parents' education level averages range from 0.8 to 3.3 scale score points. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding. SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1994 U.S. History Assessment.</small>		

Public and Nonpublic Schools. Table 6 shows the NAEP 1994 U.S. history results for students attending public and nonpublic schools. As was the case in the NAEP 1994 reading assessment, students attending nonpublic schools (either Catholic schools or other nonpublic schools) had significantly higher average scores than did students attending public schools.

As was noted in Chapter 1, the reader is cautioned against using these data to make simplistic inferences about the relative effectiveness of public and nonpublic schools. Average performance differences between the two types of schools are in part related to socioeconomic factors and sociological factors, such as levels of parental education. To get a clearer picture of the differences between public and nonpublic schools, more in-depth analyses need to be undertaken.

Endnotes

1. Looker, E.D., "Accuracy of proxy reports of parental status characteristics," in *Sociology of Education*, 62(4), pp. 257-276, 1989.

TABLE 6		
Average NAEP U.S. History Scores by Type of School		
	Percentage of Students	Average Scale Score
Grade 4		
Nation	100	205
Type of School		
Public Schools	90	203
Nonpublic Schools	10	222
Catholic Schools	6	221
Other Nonpublic Schools	4	224
Grade 8		
Nation	100	259
Type of School		
Public Schools	90	257
Nonpublic Schools	10	278
Catholic Schools	6	279
Other Nonpublic Schools	4	277
Grade 12		
Nation	100	286
Type of School		
Public Schools	89	284
Nonpublic Schools	11	299
Catholic Schools	6	298
Other Nonpublic Schools	5	299

The NAEP U.S. History scale ranges from 0 to 500.
The standard errors for the national averages are between 0.6 and 1.0 scale score points.
The standard errors for the type of school averages range from 0.7 to 3.1 scale score points.
SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1994 U.S. History Assessment.