

CHAPTER 3

A First Look at Attainment of Achievement Levels by America's Students

The percentages of students who attained each of the achievement levels in the NAEP 1994 U.S. history assessment are presented in this chapter. Results are displayed for the nation, for region, and for the major subgroups.

The National Education Statistics Act of 1994 requires that the National Assessment Governing Board develop “appropriate student performance levels” for reporting NAEP results. The NAEP law requires that these levels be “used on a developmental basis until the Commissioner of Education Statistics determines . . . that such levels are reasonable, valid, and informative to the public.” It requires the Commissioner and the Governing Board to make clear the developmental status of such levels.

The student achievement levels in this report have been developed and adopted by the National Assessment Governing Board, NAEP's independent policy-making body, with contributions from a wide variety of educators, business and government leaders, and interested citizens. These levels of student achievement have been established to help Americans answer two questions that are important to parents and to all citizens in the communities and nation in which we live. These questions are: “What should students know and be able to do as they progress and graduate from school?” and “How good is good enough in terms of student achievement on NAEP?” Answering these questions obviously involves judgments. The National Assessment Governing Board is not suggesting that there is a single answer to these questions. Rather, the Board is trying to put forward reasonable judgments that can inform citizens across America — information they can use to answer these questions in their own schools and communities.

Developing carefully considered judgments about “what students should know and be able to do” and “how good is good enough” is both difficult and controversial. The Governing Board believes that these questions are so important that answers must be sought in an informed, responsible way. The process is subject to revision and refinement as appropriate.

The student achievement levels in this report, approved by the Governing Board, are the result of countless hours of work. The levels are based on preliminary descriptions developed as part of the national consensus process to determine the assessment design and content. The Board's contractor, American College Testing (ACT), which has extensive experience in standard setting in many fields, designed the achievement level-setting process. This process was reviewed by scores of individuals, including policymakers, professional organizations, teachers, parents, and other members of the general public. To develop the levels, ACT convened a cross-section of educators and interested citizens from across the nation and asked them to recommend what students should know and be able to do in U.S. history. Prior to adopting these levels of student achievement, the Board engaged a large number of persons to comment on the recommended levels and to review the results.

The result of the achievement level-setting process is a set of achievement level descriptions, a set of achievement level cutpoints on the 500-point NAEP scale, and exemplar questions. The cutpoints are minimum scores that define *Basic*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced* performance at grades 4, 8, and 12. At present, evaluations conducted on the level-setting process and critiques of those evaluations have provided mixed reviews. Therefore, both the Governing Board and the Commissioner of Education Statistics regard the achievement levels as developmental; they should not be interpreted as statistically conclusive. Because these levels are still considered developmental, the reader of this report is advised to consider that status when interpreting the results. The reader should recognize that the results are based on the judgments of panels, approved by the Governing Board, of what *Basic*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced* students should know and be able to do in each subject assessed, as well as on their judgments regarding what percent of students at the

borderline for each level should answer each test question correctly. The latter information is used in translating the achievement level descriptions into cutpoints on the NAEP scale. NCES uses these levels in reporting NAEP results, but it does not currently adjudicate the reliability or validity of these achievement levels. Rather they are reported directly as adopted by the Governing Board.

The U.S. history results presented here for grades 4, 8, and 12 illustrate one of the difficulties of setting achievement levels. The Governing Board is concerned about the discrepancy between actual student performance described in this report and the expectations for performance that are contained in the achievement levels. Simply stated, students are not performing as well on the NAEP U.S. history assessment, particularly at grade 12, as the Governing Board and the many panelists and reviewers think these students should perform. For example, most students take at least one high school course in U.S. history by the end of the eleventh grade. Yet the achievement levels indicate that more than half (57 percent) of twelfth graders are performing below the *Basic* level, with 1 percent scoring at the *Advanced* level. In contrast, data from the College Board show that about 2.4 percent of all graduating seniors score well enough on the Advanced Placement exam in U.S. history to be considered qualified for college credit.

Since NAEP is a cross-sectional survey of student achievement, it cannot readily identify cause and effect relationships to explain why students scored high or low. Although one hypothesis is that students' performance was found to be too low because the achievement levels are set too high, NAGB does not believe that this is the case. At present, studies on these achievement levels, conducted by ACT, have pointed in opposite directions — one suggested the levels were too high, the other that they were too low. The Governing Board intends to look carefully at this gap between expected and actual performance, and encourages others to do so as well.

Nevertheless, there are several other hypotheses that might account for this gap between actual student scores and the achievement levels. Motivation, particularly at grade 12, is a perennial question in an assessment like NAEP for which there are no stakes or rewards for students to do well. (However, it is not clear why students should be less motivated in taking this history assessment than other NAEP assessments in which higher percentages of students reached the various cutpoints.) There may be differences between what is taught in the broad array of U.S. history classes and the content of this NAEP assessment. A lack of consistency between the grade levels at which the subject is taught and the NAEP assessment of grades 4, 8, and 12 could account for some of this discrepancy. The judges for the twelfth grade levels may have had relatively higher expectations than judges for the other grades. Finally, the difference between more conventional testing practices in some classrooms and the NAEP assessment questions may be another factor. NAEP includes a variety of questions, from multiple-choice questions to open-ended tasks that require students to apply knowledge and demonstrate skills by writing their answers.

Many of these factors, or a combination of all of them, could explain the gap between standards for student performance contained in the NAGB achievement levels and the actual performance on the NAEP 1994 U.S. history assessment. The National Assessment Governing Board urges all who are concerned about “what students should know and be able to do” and “how good is good enough” to read and interpret these performance levels recognizing that this is a developing, judgmental process and is subject to various interpretations. The decision to include the levels in NAEP reports is an attempt to make the assessment results more useful for parents, educators, and policymakers by providing performance standards against which to measure educational progress.

As explained in Chapter 1, three achievement levels — *Basic*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced* — have been established by the National Assessment Governing Board for reporting NAEP results. The *Basic* level denotes partial mastery of the knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at a given grade. The *Proficient* level represents solid academic performance. Students reaching this level demonstrate competency with a range of challenging subject matter. The *Advanced* level signifies superior performance at a given grade.

Specific definitions of the three levels of U.S. history achievement for each of the three grades are presented in Figure 3. For each grade, the definitions are cumulative from *Basic* through *Advanced*. In other words, students performing at the *Proficient* level also display the competencies associated with the *Basic* level; and students performing at the *Advanced* level demonstrate skills and knowledge associated with both preceding levels.

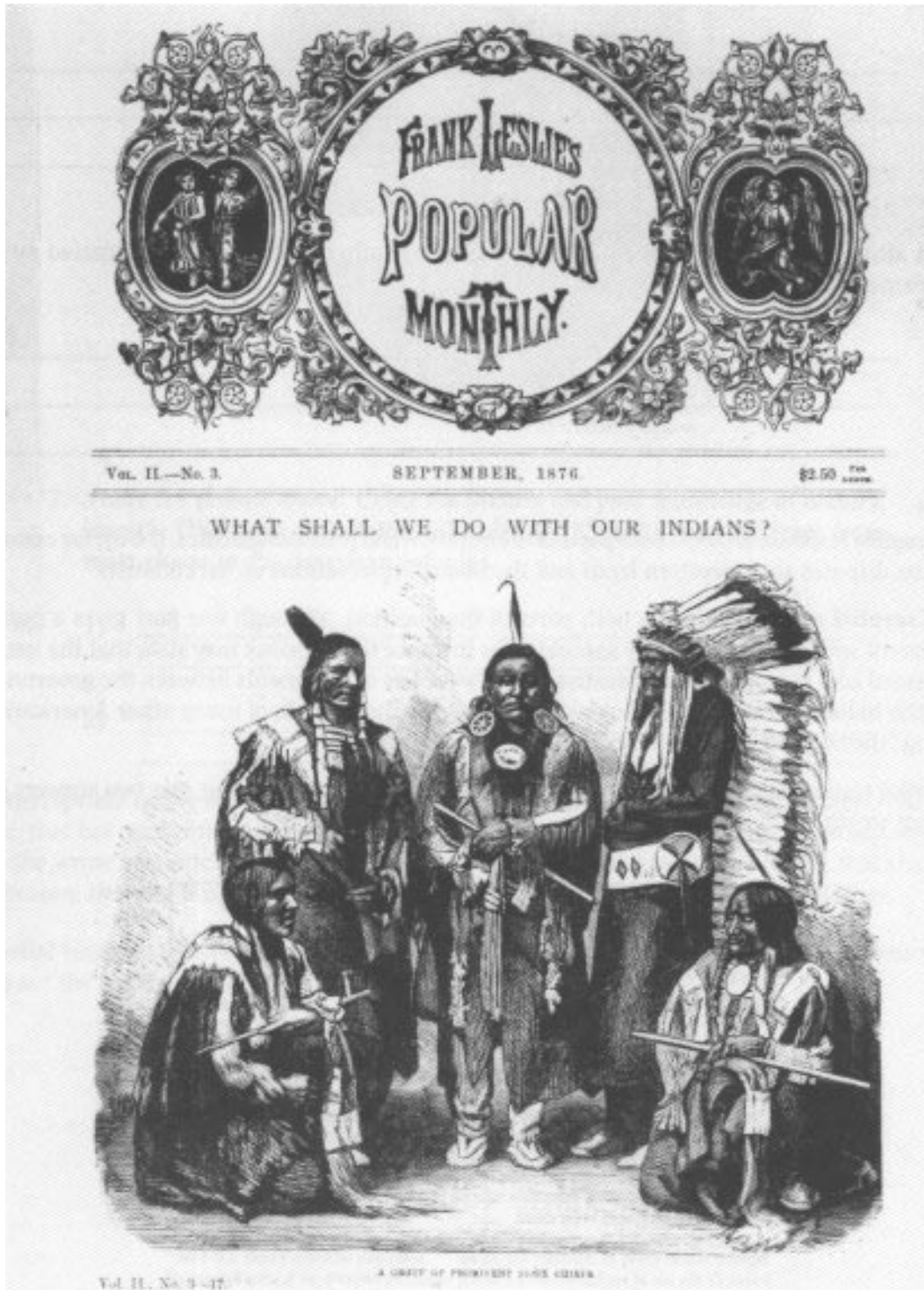
As part of the development of the achievement levels, NAGB also selected student responses that, in the judgment of the panelists, illustrated the levels. Figure 4 presents an eighth-grade question and three student responses corresponding to the three achievement levels. Accompanying the question is a table that presents two types of percentages: (1) the overall percentage of students within a grade who successfully answered the question, and (2) the percentages of students within each of the achievement level intervals — *Basic*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced* — who answered the question successfully. For the question presented in Figure 4, 25 percent of all eighth graders provided answers rated “Essential” or better as described in the scoring rubric. For those eighth graders who scored within the *Basic* achievement level interval, 32 percent provided answers rated as “Essential” or better. Over half the eighth graders (59 percent) who scored within the *Proficient* achievement level interval provided such answers. The standard errors associated with each percentage are also included in the table. The percentages for students within the *Advanced* achievement level interval are not presented, however, because of small sample size. (Appendix B contains additional sample questions from the NAEP 1994 U.S. history assessment.)

Figure 3. U.S. History Achievement Levels

GRADE 4	
BASIC (195)	Fourth-grade students performing at the basic level should be able to identify and describe a few of the most familiar people, places, events, ideas, and documents in American history. They should be able to explain the reasons for celebrating most national holidays, have some familiarity with the geography of their own state and the United States, and be able to express in writing a few ideas about a familiar theme in American history.
PROFICIENT (243)	Fourth-grade students performing at the proficient level should be able to identify, describe, and comment on the significance of many historical people, places, ideas, events, and documents. They should interpret information from a variety of sources, including texts, maps, pictures, and timelines. They should be able to construct a simple timeline from data. These students should recognize the role of invention and technological change in history. They should also recognize the ways in which geographic and environmental factors have influenced life and work.
ADVANCED (276)	Fourth-grade students performing at the advanced level should have a beginning understanding of the relationships between people, places, ideas, events, and documents. They should know where to look for information, including reference books, maps, local museums, interviews with family and neighbors, and other sources. They should be able to use historical themes to organize and interpret historical topics, and to incorporate insights from beyond the classroom into their understanding of history. These students should understand and explain the role of invention and technological change in history. They should also understand and explain the ways in which geographic and environmental factors have influenced life and work.
GRADE 8	
BASIC (252)	Eighth-grade students performing at the basic level should be able to identify and place in context a range of historical people, places, events, ideas, and documents. They should be able to distinguish between primary and secondary sources. They should have a beginning understanding of the diversity of the American people and the ways in which people from a wide variety of national and cultural heritages have become part of a single nation. Eighth-grade students at the basic level should also have a beginning understanding of the fundamental political ideas and institutions of American life and their historical origins. They should be able to explain the significance of some major historical events.
PROFICIENT (294)	Eighth-grade students performing at the proficient level should be able to explain the significance of people, places, events, ideas, and documents, and to recognize the connection between people and events within historical contexts. They should understand and be able to explain the opportunities, perspectives, and challenges associated with a diverse cultural population. They should incorporate geographic, technological, and other considerations in their understanding of events and should have knowledge of significant political ideas and institutions. They should be able to communicate ideas about historical themes while citing evidence from primary and secondary sources to support their conclusions.
ADVANCED (327)	Eighth-grade students performing at the advanced level should recognize significant themes and movements in history and begin to understand particular events in light of these themes and movements. They should have an awareness of continuity and change over time and be able to draw relevant analogies between past events and present-day situations. They should be able to frame questions about historical topics and use multiple sources to develop historical generalizations and interpretations. They should be able to explain the importance of historical themes, including some awareness of their political, social, and economic dimensions.
GRADE 12	
BASIC (294)	Twelfth-grade students performing at the basic level should be able to identify the significance of many people, places, events, dates, ideas, and documents in U.S. history. They should also recognize the importance of unity and diversity in the social and cultural history of the United States, and have an awareness of America's changing relationships with the rest of the world. They should have a sense of continuity and change in history and be able to relate relevant experience from the past to their understanding of contemporary issues. They should recognize that history is subject to interpretation and should understand the role of evidence in making a historical argument.
PROFICIENT (325)	Twelfth-grade students performing at the proficient level should understand particular people, places, events, ideas, and documents in historical context, with some awareness of the political, economic, geographic, social, religious, technological, and ideological factors that shape historical settings. They should be able to communicate reasoned interpretations of past events, using historical evidence effectively to support their positions. Their written arguments should reflect some in-depth grasp of issues and refer to both primary and secondary sources.
ADVANCED (355)	Twelfth-grade students achieving at the advanced level should demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of events and sources of U.S. history. Recognizing that history is subject to interpretation, they should be able to evaluate historical claims critically in light of the evidence. They should understand that important issues and themes have been addressed differently at different times and that America's political, social, and cultural traditions have changed over time. They should be able to write well-reasoned arguments on complex historical topics and draw upon a wide range of sources to inform their conclusions.

Figure 4. U.S. History Achievement Level Illustration – Grade 8 Exercise

The following question refers to the magazine cover below.



Philadelphia Museum of Art:
Purchased: Lola Downin Peck Fund.

Figure 4. U.S. History Achievement Level Illustration – Grade 8 Exercise (continued)

Look at the magazine cover. What historical events would have led this question and picture to appear on the cover of a popular magazine in 1876 ?

What attitudes displayed toward American Indians by other Americans are suggested by this magazine cover?

A **Complete** response answers both parts of the question and provides specifics. It may, for example, discuss disputes about western lands and the issue of reservations vs. assimilation.

An **Essential** response answers both parts of the question, although one part gives a general statement without providing any specifics. For instance the response may state that the issue is addressed on a magazine cover because “there were lots of arguments between the government and the Indians then”; or, the response may describe the attitude of many other Americans by saying “they did not like the Sioux Indians.”

A **Partial** response correctly answers only one part of the question. It may give two answers that are not wrong but both are very vague.

<i>Grade 8</i>	Percentage “Essential” or Better within Achievement Level Intervals		
	<i>Basic</i> 252-293*	<i>Proficient</i> 294-326*	<i>Advanced</i> 327 and above*
Overall Percentage Essential or Better			
25 (1.2)	32 (2.0)	59 (4.4)	**

* NAEP U.S. history composite scale range. ** Sample size insufficient to permit reliable estimate. The percentage of students below *Basic* who successfully answered the question is not included in the table. However, these students are included in the overall percentage. The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent certainty that for each population of interest, the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample.

Figure 4. U.S. History Achievement Level Illustration – Grade 8 Exercise (continued)

The following samples of students' responses were selected by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) to be illustrative for the three achievement levels they established for the 1994 NAEP U. S. history assessment. The scoring guide or rubric presented on page 16 was used in rating students' responses. The responses were not scored using the NAGB achievement levels descriptions as guides. Students within any of the three achievement levels would be expected to vary in terms of their performance on any given question. The sample response presented were selected to illustrate what a typical student in a given achievement level was capable of producing.

BASIC – GRADE 8

Look at the magazine cover. What historical events would have led this question and picture to appear on the cover of a popular magazine in 1876 ?

They didn't like the Indians back then because they thought they bothered them and were wondering what they shall do with their Indians

What attitudes displayed toward American Indians by other Americans are suggested by this magazine cover?

The Americans do not like the Indians and are wanting to get rid of them.

Figure 4. U.S. History Achievement Level Illustration – Grade 8 Exercise (continued)

PROFICIENT – GRADE 8

Look at the magazine cover. What historical events would have led this question and picture to appear on the cover of a popular magazine in 1876?

The genocide of Indians while settlers enjoyed their new land

What attitudes displayed toward American Indians by other Americans are suggested by this magazine cover?

That some people felt sorry for the Native Americans

ADVANCED – GRADE 8

Look at the magazine cover. What historical events would have led this question and picture to appear on the cover of a popular magazine in 1876?

Indian uprisings and ambushes of frontier farmers
army putting Indians on reservation

What attitudes displayed toward American Indians by other Americans are suggested by this magazine cover?

that they were less than human and far behind rest of the world and they were a nuisance to frontier farmers and settlers and had to be put away on reservations

Achievement Level Results for the Nation

The percentages of students performing at or above the three achievement levels are shown in Table 7. The most striking finding is that many students failed to achieve the *Basic* level established by NAGB for the NAEP U.S. history assessments. Across the grades, 36 percent of fourth graders, 39 percent of eighth graders, and 57 percent of twelfth graders were classified as performing below the *Basic* level. In other words, 43 percent of the grade 12 students scored at or above the *Basic* level.

The *Proficient* level — defined as signifying solid academic performance — was reached by fewer than one fifth of the students at any grade. Among high school seniors, 11 percent of the students were classified as *Proficient* or *Advanced*. At grades 4 and 8, the percentages of students at or above the *Proficient* level were 17 and 14, respectively. Finally, 2 percent of fourth graders and 1 percent of eighth and twelfth graders reached the *Advanced* level.

		Percentage of Students				
		Percentage of All Students	At or Above Advanced	At or Above Proficient	At or Above Basic	Below Basic
Grade 4						
Nation		100	2	17	64	36
Region						
	Northeast	22	3	18	63	37
	Southeast	23	2	15	61	39
	Central	25	3	20	71	29
	West	30	1	16	61	39
Grade 8						
Nation		100	1	14	61	39
Region						
	Northeast	20	1	19	69	31
	Southeast	25	0	9	51	49
	Central	24	1	17	69	31
	West	31	1	11	58	42
Grade 12						
Nation		100	1	11	43	57
Region						
	Northeast	20	1	13	46	54
	Southeast	23	0	8	37	63
	Central	27	1	11	45	55
	West	30	1	10	43	57

The standard errors for the (a) Advanced Level, national percentages range from 0.1 to 0.3; (b) Proficient Level, national percentages range from 0.6 to 1.0; and (c) Basic Level, national percentages range from 0.9 to 1.1.

The standard errors for the (a) Advanced Level, regional percentages range from 0.2 to 1.0; (b) Proficient Level, regional percentages range from 0.8 to 2.6; and (c) Basic Level, regional percentages range from 1.3 to 2.8.

The estimates of population percentages reported as zero (and standard errors reported as 0.0) are actually non-zero but rounded to zero when reporting to the nearest integer (or nearest tenth in the case of the standard errors).

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

Achievement Level Results by Region

Table 7 and Figure 5 show the regional percentages of students scoring at or above each U.S. history achievement level. There were no statistically significant differences among regions at the fourth-grade level. Further, across the three grades there were no significant regional variations in the percentage of students attaining the *Advanced* level.

More significant regional differences were observed at the eighth grade. The percentage of eighth graders at or above the *Basic* level in the Southeast was less than the percentages of students in other regions. The percentages of students in the Northeast and Central regions who score at or above the *Basic* level were also higher than that in the West. Finally, at grade 8, the percentages of students in the Northeast and Central regions at or above the *Proficient* level were higher than the percentages in the other two regions.

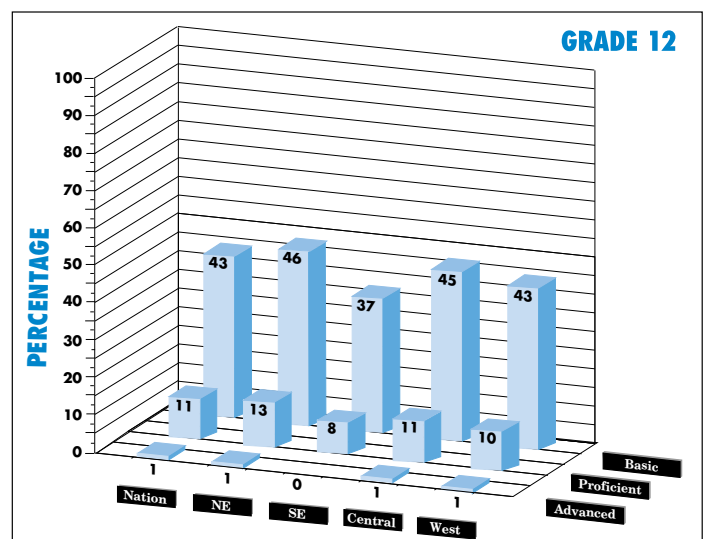
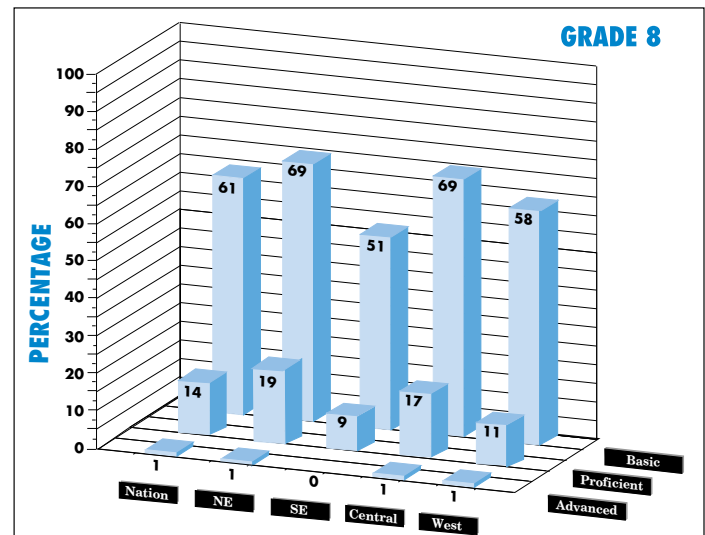
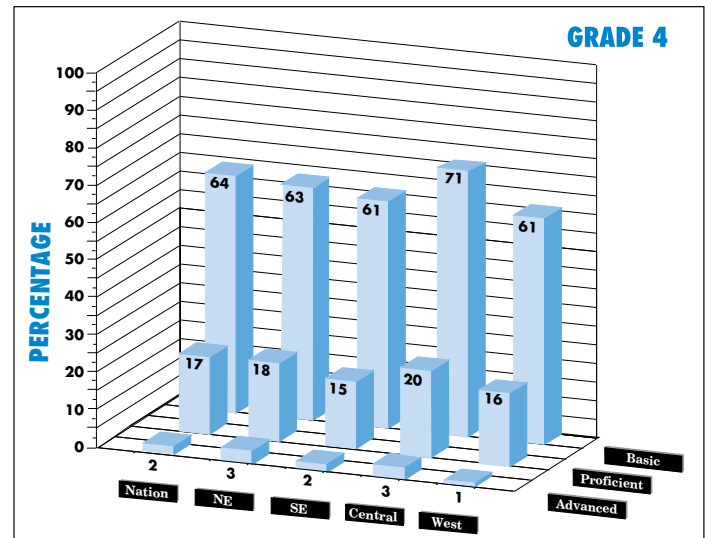
At grade 12, there were only two statistically significant regional differences. The percentages of students in the Northeast and Central regions at or above the *Basic* level were substantially higher than the percentage in the Southeast.

Achievement Levels by Major Reporting Subgroups

Tables 8 through 11 present the percentages of students in various subgroups scoring at or above each of the three achievement levels. Again, the discussion of the findings is limited to statistically significant differences between subgroups.

Race/Ethnicity. The attainment of achievement levels by students in particular racial/ethnic subgroups is shown in Table 8. As in other NAEP assessments, there were substantial subgroup differences. At grade 4, the percentages of White students at or above each of the three achievement levels were higher than the percentages of Black and Hispanic students. Further, a higher percentage of White students reached the *Basic* or *Proficient* levels than did American Indian students. A higher percentage of Asian students than Black and Hispanic students performed at or above the *Proficient* and *Basic* levels. Finally, the percentage of Pacific Islander students who were classified at or above the *Basic* level was significantly higher than that of Black students.

Figure 5. Percent of Students At or Above the U.S. History Achievement Levels by Grade and by Region




NE — Northeast SE — Southeast

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

At grade 8, the percentages of White students at or above each of the three achievement levels were higher than the percentages of Black and Hispanic students. A higher percentage of Asian students than Black and Hispanic students performed at or above the *Proficient* and *Basic* levels.

At grade 12 there were fewer significant differences across the racial/ethnic subgroups than there were at the other grades. A higher percentage of White seniors than

Black seniors reached each of the three achievement levels. In addition, the percentages of White students at or above the *Proficient* and *Basic* levels were higher than the percentages for Hispanic students. Finally, a higher percentage of Asian students than Black or Hispanic students scored at or above the *Basic* level.

TABLE 8		U.S. History Achievement Levels by Race/Ethnicity				THE NATION'S REPORT CARD  1994 U.S. History Assessment				
						Percentage of Students				
		Percentage of All Students	At or Above Advanced	At or Above Proficient	At or Above Basic	Below Basic				
Grade 4										
Nation		100	2	17	64	36				
Race/Ethnicity										
	White	69	3	22	74	26				
	Black	15	0	4	36	64				
	Hispanic	11	1	6	41	59				
	Asian	2	4	22	64	36				
	Pacific Islander	1	3	16	59	41				
	American Indian	2	0	9	51	49				
Grade 8										
Nation		100	1	14	61	39				
Race/Ethnicity										
	White	69	1	17	71	29				
	Black	15	0	4	33	67				
	Hispanic	11	0	5	41	59				
	Asian	2	2	23	72	28				
	Pacific Islander	1 !	1 !	11 !	52 !	48 !				
	American Indian	1 !	0 !	5 !	42 !	58 !				
Grade 12										
Nation		100	1	11	43	57				
Race/Ethnicity										
	White	74	1	13	50	50				
	Black	12	0	2	17	83				
	Hispanic	9	0	4	22	78				
	Asian	3	2	16	46	54				
	Pacific Islander	1	1	7	33	67				
	American Indian	1 !	0 !	5 !	30 !	70 !				

The standard errors for the (a) Advanced Level, national percentages range from 0.1 to 0.3; (b) Proficient Level, national percentages range from 0.6 to 1.0; and (c) Basic Level, national percentages range from 0.9 to 1.1.

The standard errors for the (a) Advanced Level, race/ethnicity percentages range from 0.1 to 2.9; (b) Proficient Level, race/ethnicity percentages range from 0.6 to 5.1; and (c) Basic Level, race/ethnicity percentages range from 1.1 to 8.7.

Percentages of students in the subgroups may not total 100 due to rounding.

The estimates of population percentages reported as zero (and standard errors reported as 0.0) are actually non-zero but rounded to zero when reporting to the nearest integer (or nearest tenth in the case of the standard errors).

! 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.

As was mentioned in Chapter 2, the nature of the grades 8 and 12 American Indian student samples and the grade 8 Pacific Islander student sample does not allow accurate determination of the standard errors. For this reason, differences among these groups and other racial/ethnic groups are not discussed.

When interpreting these data, readers should keep in mind the cautions about interpreting group differences that are discussed in Chapter 1. A further reason for caution is that while the percentages of White students scoring at the *Advanced* level are larger (in a statistically significant sense) than those of Black students (at all grades) and Hispanic students

(at grades 4 and 8), the practical importance of these differences may be limited by the small numbers of students reaching the *Advanced* level. For example, at grade 12 only 1 percent of White students attained this achievement level.

Gender. Table 9 presents achievement level results for males and females. There were no statistically significant differences between the two groups at grades 4 or 8. At grade 12, the percentages of males at or above the *Basic* level and at or above the *Proficient* level were higher than the percentages of females at or above those levels.

		Percentage of Students				
		Percentage of All Students	At or Above Advanced	At or Above Proficient	At or Above Basic	Below Basic
Grade 4	Nation	100	2	17	64	36
	Gender					
	Male	50	2	18	62	38
	Female	50	2	16	65	35
Grade 8	Nation	100	1	14	61	39
	Gender					
	Male	50	1	15	61	39
	Female	50	1	13	61	39
Grade 12	Nation	100	1	11	43	57
	Gender					
	Male	50	1	12	45	55
	Female	50	1	9	40	60

The standard errors for the (a) Advanced Level, national percentages range from 0.1 to 0.3; (b) Proficient Level, national percentages range from 0.6 to 1.0; and (c) Basic Level, national percentages range from 0.9 to 1.1.


The standard errors for the (a) Advanced Level, gender percentages range from 0.1 to 0.4; (b) Proficient Level, gender percentages range from 0.7 to 1.4; and (c) Basic Level, gender percentages range from 1.0 to 1.6.

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



Parents' Educational Level. As shown in Table 10, parental education and student achievement are positively related. This mirrors the average NAEP U.S. history score results discussed in the previous chapter. At all three grades, a higher percentage of students who reported that at least one parent had graduated from college reached the *Advanced* level than those reporting that their parents had graduated from high school. In addition, at grade 12 a higher percentage of students who reported this highest level of parental education reached the *Advanced* level compared to their counterparts who reported that neither parent graduated from high school.

At the *Proficient* and *Basic* levels, the patterns were similar. At all grades, the percentages of students reporting that their parents had achieved a given level of education were generally higher than those reporting lower levels of parental education. For example, at grade 8, students who reported that at least one parent graduated from college were more likely to score at or above the *Proficient* level than were students who reported that at least one parent had achieved some education after high school. The latter group was more likely to score at or above the *Proficient* level than were students who reported at least one parent graduated from high school; who, in turn, showed higher

		Percentage of Students			
		Percentage of All Students	At or Above Advanced	At or Above Proficient	At or Above Basic
					
U.S. History Achievement Levels by Parents' Education Level					
Grade 4					
Nation	100	2	17	64	36
Parents' Education Level					
Graduated from College	43	4	25	74	26
Some Education After High School	8	3	21	74	26
Graduated from High School	12	1	10	57	43
Did Not Finish High School	4	0	2	37	63
I Don't Know	34	0	10	55	45
Grade 8					
Nation	100	1	14	61	39
Parents' Education Level					
Graduated from College	42	1	22	74	26
Some Education After High School	19	0	14	68	32
Graduated from High School	23	0	7	50	50
Did Not Finish High School	7	0	3	37	63
I Don't Know	9	0	3	36	64
Grade 12					
Nation	100	1	11	43	57
Parents' Education Level					
Graduated from College	45	1	17	56	44
Some Education After High School	25	1	8	42	58
Graduated from High School	20	0	4	29	71
Did Not Finish High School	7	0	1	15	85
I Don't Know	3	0	1	12	88
<p>The standard errors for the (a) Advanced Level, national percentages range from 0.1 to 0.3; (b) Proficient Level, national percentages range from 0.6 to 1.0; and (c) Basic Level, national percentages range from 0.9 to 1.1.</p> <p>The standard errors for the (a) Advanced Level, parents' education level percentages range from 0.1 to 1.0; (b) Proficient Level, parents' education level percentages range from 0.6 to 2.6; and (c) Basic Level, parents' education level percentages range from 1.2 to 4.1.</p> <p>Percentages of students in the subgroups may not total 100 due to rounding.</p> <p>The estimates of population percentages reported as zero (and standard errors reported as 0.0) are actually non-zero but rounded to zero when reporting to the nearest integer (or nearest tenth in the case of the standard errors).</p> <p>SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1994 U.S. History Assessment.</p>					

achievement than those who reported that neither parent had finished high school. The exception to this rule is at grade 4, where there were no significant differences in the achievement level attainments of children who reported that at least one parent graduated from college and those who reported that at least one parent had some education after high school.

It should be noted that one-third of fourth graders and one-tenth of eighth graders did not know their parents' level of education. Also, as was noted previously, the accuracy of student self-reported data may be open to some question. Nonetheless, the positive relationship between parental education and achievement in U.S. history remains striking.

Public and Nonpublic Schools. Achievement level results for students in public and nonpublic schools are

shown in Table 11. At all grades, a higher percentage of nonpublic school students performed at or above both the *Basic* and *Proficient* levels than did their public school counterparts. At the eighth grade, the percentage of nonpublic school students at the *Advanced* level was also higher than the percentage of public school students, although only 2 percent of nonpublic school students attained this level.

As was noted in Chapter 1, the reader is cautioned against making simplistic inferences about the relative effectiveness of public and nonpublic schools from these data. Achievement level 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 are needed.

		Percentage of Students				
		Percentage of All Students	At or Above Advanced	At or Above Proficient	At or Above Basic	Below Basic
Grade 4						
Nation		100	2	17	64	36
Type of School						
Public Schools Only		90	2	16	62	38
Nonpublic Schools Only		10	3	26	82	18
Catholic Schools		6	2	24	81	19
Other Nonpublic Schools		4	5	29	83	17
Grade 8						
Nation		100	1	14	61	39
Type of School						
Public Schools Only		90	1	12	59	41
Nonpublic Schools Only		10	2	28	84	16
Catholic Schools		6	2	29	85	15
Other Nonpublic Schools		4	2	26	83	17
Grade 12						
Nation		100	1	11	43	57
Type of School						
Public Schools Only		89	1	10	41	59
Nonpublic Schools Only		11	1	18	59	41
Catholic Schools		6	1	18	57	43
Other Nonpublic Schools		5	2	19	61	39

The standard errors for the (a) Advanced Level, national percentages range from 0.1 to 0.3; (b) Proficient Level, national percentages range from 0.6 to 1.0; and (c) Basic Level, national percentages range from 0.9 to 1.1.

The standard errors for the (a) Advanced Level, type of school percentages range from 0.2 to 1.4; (b) Proficient Level, type of school percentages range from 0.6 to 3.9; and (c) Basic Level, type of school percentages range from 1.0 to 4.0.

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