

U.S. History

Highlights

The Nation's Report Card 2001

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National Assessment of Educational Progress

An Important Indicator of Educational Progress

Since 1969, NAEP has been the sole, ongoing national indicator of what American students know and can do in major academic subjects.

Over the years, NAEP has measured students' achievement in many subjects, including reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. history, civics, geography, and the arts. In 2001, NAEP conducted a national assessment in U.S. history at grades 4, 8, and 12.

NAEP is a project of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the U.S. Department of Education and is overseen by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB).

Improvements Seen in NAEP 2001 U.S. History Results at Grades 4 and 8

Results for the 2001 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) U.S. history assessment show that the average scores of fourth- and eighth-grade students have improved since 1994. The average score of twelfth-grade students, however, has not changed significantly.



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1994 and 2001 U.S. History Assessments.

This history assessment was first administered to nationally representative samples of fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-grade students in 1994. The figure above shows national average scores in 1994 and 2001 based on a 0–500 NAEP U.S. history scale at each grade.

In 2001, the average scores of fourth- and eighth-graders improved in comparison to 1994. The 2001 score for twelfth-graders was not statistically different from the 1994 score.

It should be noted that every test score has a standard error—a range of a few points plus or

minus the score—which accounts for potential score fluctuation due to sampling error and measurement error. Statistical tests that factor in these standard errors are used to determine whether the differences between average scores are significant. Estimates based on smaller subgroups are likely to have relatively large standard errors. As a consequence, some seemingly large differences may not be statistically significant. Only statistically significant differences are cited in this report.

Achievement Levels Provide Yardstick for Student Performance

Achievement levels provide a context for interpreting student performance on NAEP. These performance standards, set by NAGB and based on recommendations from broadly representative panels of educators and members of the public, determine what students should know and be able to do for the *Basic*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced* levels of performance in each subject area and at each grade assessed.

As provided by law, the Deputy Commissioner of Education Statistics, upon review of a congressionally mandated evaluation of NAEP, has determined that the achievement levels are to be used on a trial basis and should be interpreted and used with caution.

However, both the Deputy Commissioner and NAGB believe that these performance standards are useful for understanding trends in student achievement. NAEP achievement levels have been widely used by national and state officials.

Detailed descriptions of the NAEP U.S. history achievement levels can be found on the NAEP Web Site at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>.

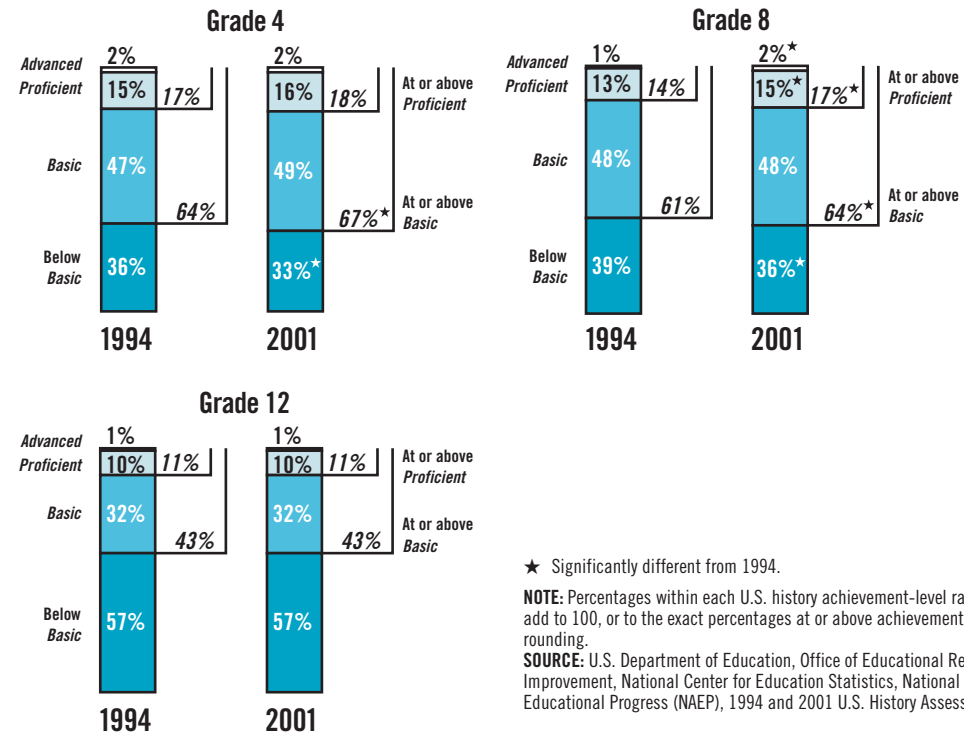
Gains Seen in Fourth- and Eighth-Graders' 2001 Achievement-Level Performance

The 2001 U.S. history assessment results show some changes since 1994 in the percentages of students at or above the NAEP achievement levels. At grade 4, the percentage of students performing at or above *Basic* increased between 1994 and 2001, although there were no changes in the percentages of students performing at or above *Proficient* and at *Advanced*. At grade 8, there were increases in the percentages of students at or above *Basic* and *Proficient*, as well as at *Advanced*. At grade 12, however, the percentages of students performing at each level in 2001 were not statistically different from 1994.

Percentage of students within and at or above achievement levels, grades 4, 8, and 12: 1994 and 2001

How to Read These Figures:

- The *italicized* percentages to the right of the shaded bars represent the percentages of students at or above *Basic* and *Proficient*.
- The percentages in the shaded bars represent the percentages of students within each achievement level.



Achievement Levels

Basic: This level denotes partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade.

Proficient: This level represents solid academic performance for each grade assessed. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter.

Advanced: This level signifies superior performance.

Gains Made by Lower-Performing Fourth-Graders and Lower- and Higher-Performing Eighth-Graders

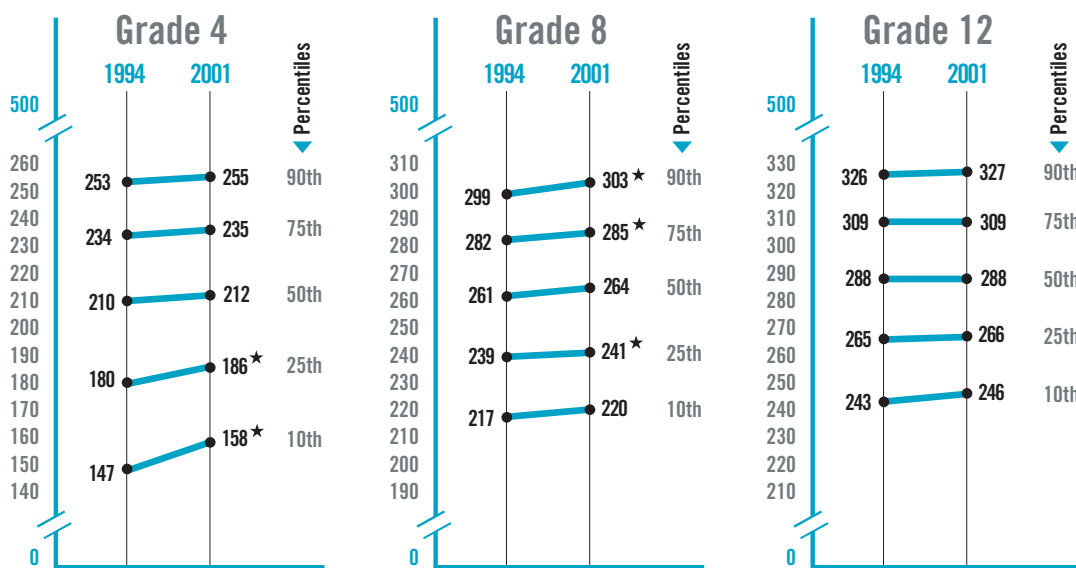
Looking at how scores changed across the performance distribution clarifies the source of the improvement in the average national score at grades 4 and 8. An examination of scores at different percentiles on the

0–500 U.S. history scale at each grade indicates whether or not the changes seen in the national average score results are reflected in the performance of lower-, middle-, and higher-performing students.

The percentile indicates the percentage of students whose scores fell below a particular average score. In 2001, for example, 25 percent of fourth-graders scored at or below 186.

As shown in the figures below, there were some changes between 1994 and 2001 at various points in the score distribution for fourth- and eighth-graders, but no significant changes for twelfth-graders.

Scale score percentiles, grades 4, 8, and 12: 1994 and 2001



★ Significantly different from 1994.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1994 and 2001 U.S. History Assessments.

At grade 4, score increases between 1994 and 2001 at the 10th and 25th percentiles indicate an improvement for lower-performing students.

At grade 8, increases were seen across a wider distribution, with improvements from 1994 to 2001 seen for both lower-performing students (25th percentile) and higher-performing students (75th and 90th percentiles).

At grade 12, performance across the score distribution in 2001 was not statistically different from 1994—a finding that reflects the results seen in the overall national average score at this grade.

NAEP 2001 U.S. History Assessment Design: Framework, Accommodations, and Samples

The NAEP U.S. history framework that describes the content for both the 1994 and 2001 assessments was developed through a national consensus process and adopted by NAGB.

The framework identifies eight historical periods and four central themes that were the basis for developing the test questions. The four central themes were:

1. Change and Continuity in American Democracy;

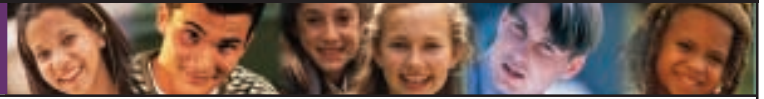
Ideas, Institutions, Practices, and Controversies;

2. The Gathering and Interactions of Peoples, Cultures, and Ideas;
3. Economic and Technological Changes and Their Relation to Society, Ideas, and the Environment; and
4. The Changing Role of America in the World.

The complete framework is available at the NAGB Web Site at <http://www.nagb.org>.

The results in this report are based on a national sample that included special-needs students; however, no testing accommodations were offered to these students. As a consequence, a small percentage of sampled students were excluded from the assessment because they could not be tested meaningfully without accommodations. No testing accommodations were offered in 1994 or 2001 so that results from the 2 assessment

years could be compared. However, a second set of 2001 results is available that is based on a sample for which accommodations were provided. This second set of results is presented in the full report, *The Nation's Report Card: U.S. History 2001*, and on the NAEP Web Site at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>. In addition, the percentage of students excluded from both samples is provided.



Subgroup Data Reveal How Various Groups of Students Performed on NAEP

In addition to reporting information on all students' performance on its assessments, NAEP also studies the performance of various subgroups of students. The U.S. history achievement of

subgroups of students in 2001 reveals whether they have progressed since 1994, as well as how they performed in comparison to other subgroups in 2001.

When reading these subgroup results, it is important to keep in mind that there is no simple, cause-and-effect relationship between membership in a subgroup and

achievement on NAEP. A complex mix of educational and socioeconomic factors may interact to affect student performance.

Average U.S. History Scores by Gender

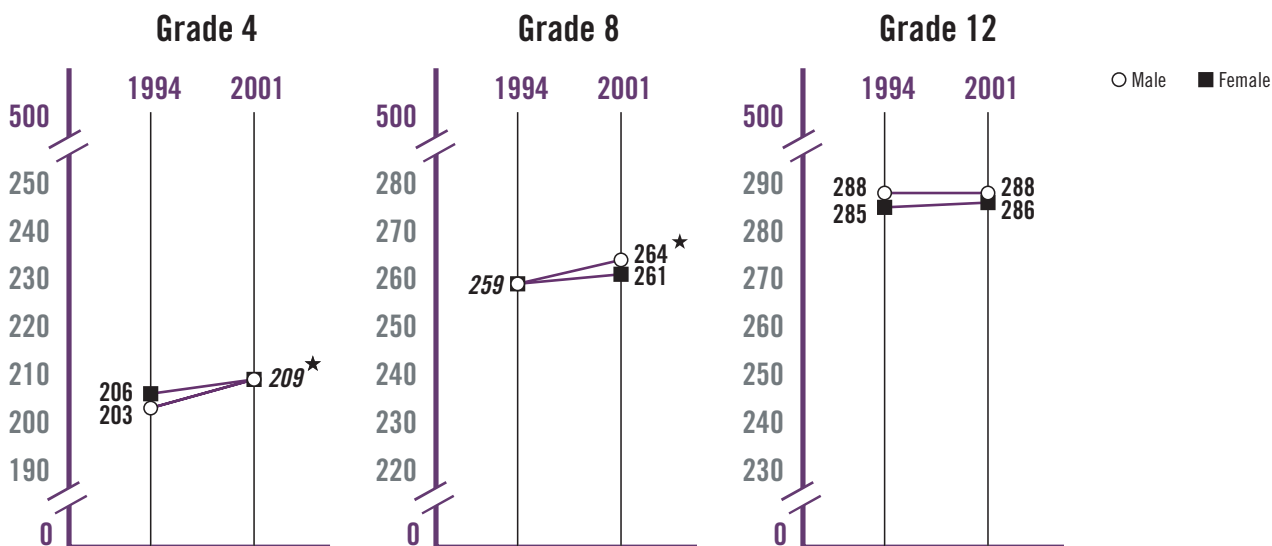
The figures below present average U.S. history scores for males and females in 1994 and 2001. At grade 4, both male and female students had higher

average scores in 2001 than in 1994, while at grade 8 only males showed a statistically significant gain in 2001 over

1994. At grade 12, neither male nor female students showed a significant change from 1994 to 2001. At all three grades in

2001, there was no statistically significant difference between the performance of males and females.

Average U.S. history scale scores by gender, grades 4, 8, and 12: 1994 and 2001



★ Significantly different from 1994.

NOTE: Italicized scale score values indicate that two or more groups had the same rounded average score. The average scale scores, when rounded, were the same for male and female students at grade 4 in 2001 and at grade 8 in 1994. At grade 4, the ★ indicating statistical significance applies to both males' and females' 2001 average score.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1994 and 2001 History Assessments.

Achievement-Level Results by Gender

The percentages of male and female students at or above the *Basic* and *Proficient* U.S. history achievement levels are presented below. Comparing the 1994 and 2001 achievement-level results for males and females shows that at

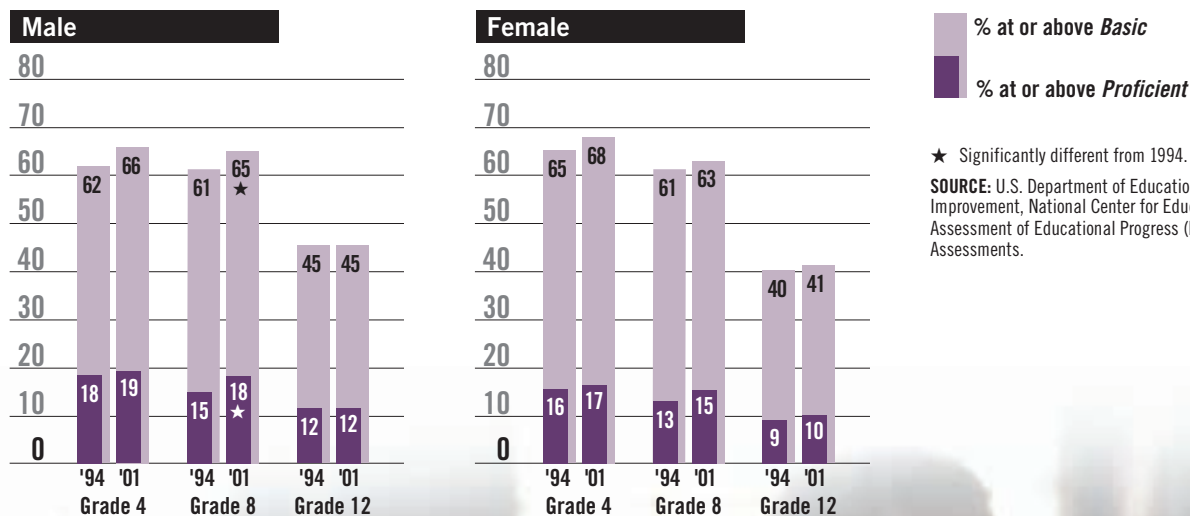
grades 4 and 12 there have been no statistically significant increases or decreases since 1994. At grade 8, however, the percentages of male students at or above *Basic* and at or above *Proficient* were higher in 2001 than in 1994.

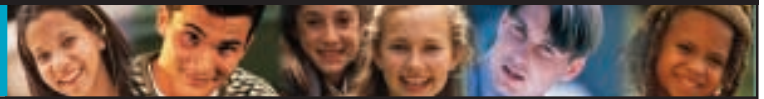
However, any apparent changes in the percentages of eighth-grade females at or above *Basic* and *Proficient* were not statistically significant.

A comparison of the differences in the percentages of male and female students at or above the

Basic and *Proficient* levels in 2001 shows no significant differences at grade 4, a higher percentage of males than females at or above *Proficient* at grade 8, and a higher percentage of males than females at or above *Basic* at grade 12.

Achievement-level results by gender, grades 4, 8, and 12: 1994 and 2001





Average U.S. History Scores by Race/Ethnicity

Students who took the NAEP U.S. history assessment were asked to indicate which of the following racial/ethnic subgroups best described them: White, Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, or American Indian (including Alaska Native). The figure below shows the average U.S.

history scores for students in these subgroups at grades 4, 8, and 12 in 1994 and 2001.

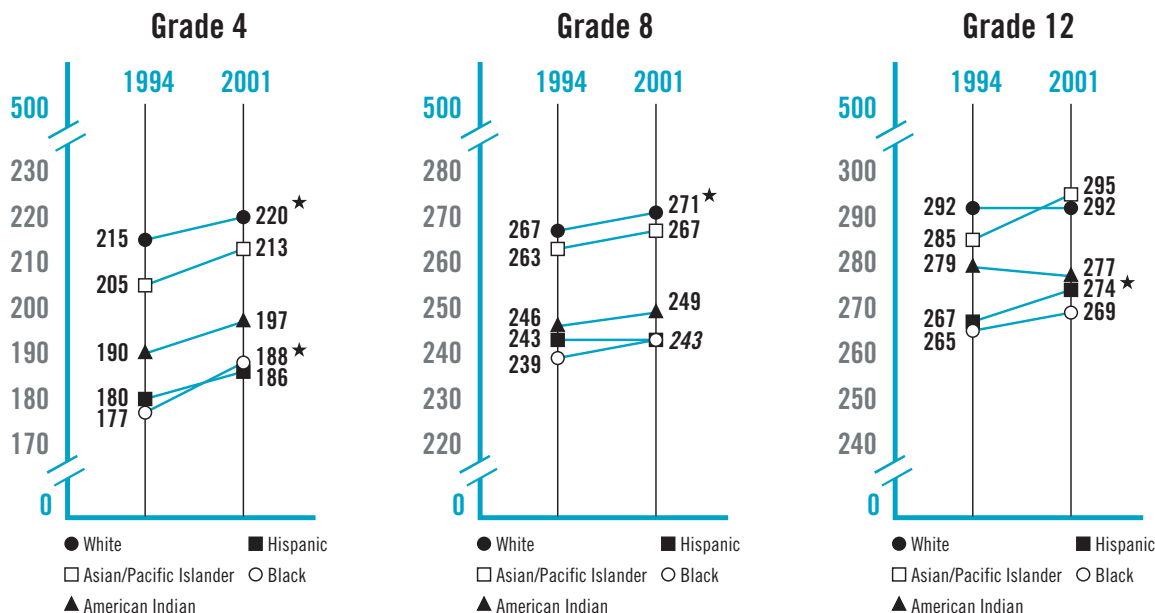
At grade 4, both White and Black students had higher average scores in 2001 than in 1994, while apparent gains for other groups of students were not statistically significant. At grade 8, White students scored

higher in 2001 than in 1994 and, at grade 12, Hispanic students had higher average scores than in 1994.

The 2001 results show a continuing pattern of average score differences between the racial/ethnic subgroups. At all three grades, White students had higher average scores than

their Black, Hispanic, and American Indian peers; and Asian/Pacific Islander students had higher average scores than Black and Hispanic students. White fourth-grade students also had higher average scores than Asian/Pacific Islander fourth-graders.

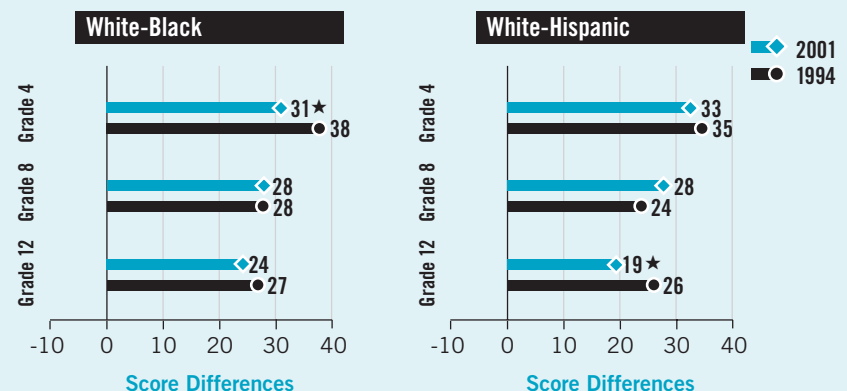
Average U.S. history scale scores by race/ethnicity, grades 4, 8, and 12: 1994 and 2001



Average U.S. History Score Gaps Between Selected Racial/Ethnic Subgroups

Average score differences in 1994 and 2001 between White students and Black students and between White students and Hispanic students are presented in the figure shown to the right. Results from the 2001 U.S. history assessment reflect a narrowing of the score gap between White students and Black students at grade 4, and between White students and Hispanic students at grade 12.

Score differences by race/ethnicity, grades 4, 8, and 12: 1994 and 2001



Achievement-Level Results by Race/Ethnicity

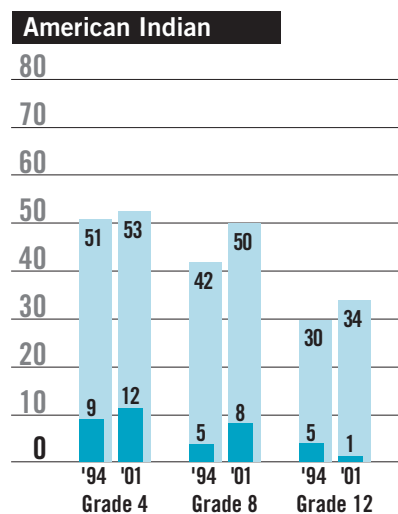
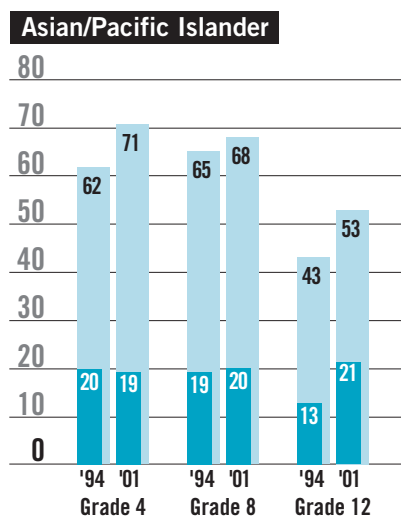
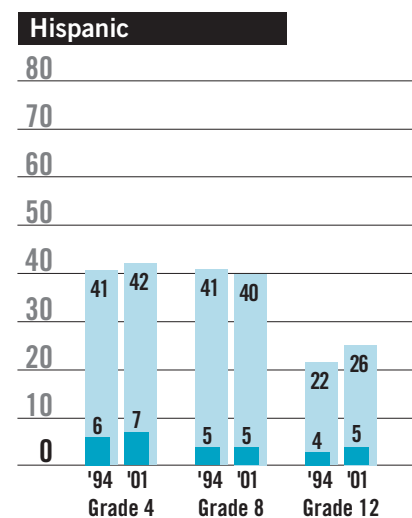
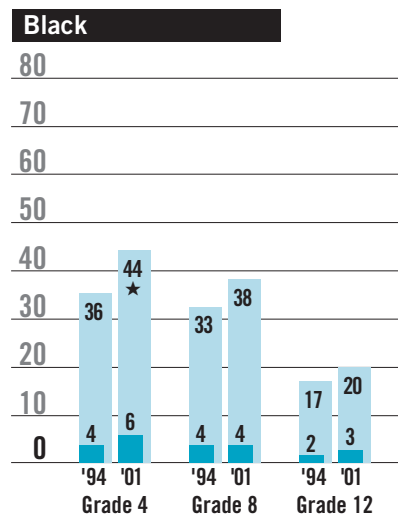
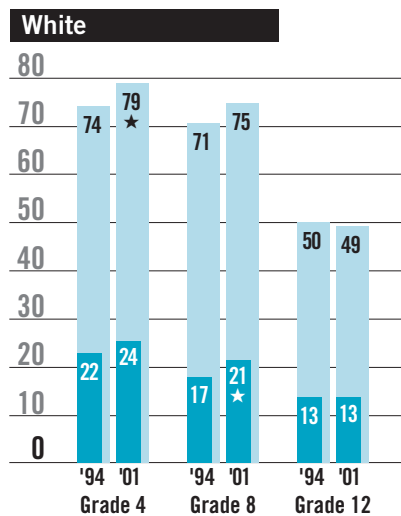
Achievement-level results for the racial/ethnic subgroups are presented in the figures below. While there have been some gains since 1994 at grades 4 and 8, not all subgroups of students have improved.

At grade 4, both White students and Black students had higher percentages at or above *Basic* in 2001 compared to 1994. At grade 8, White students were the only group to show any improvement, with an increase in the

percentage at or above *Proficient*. At grade 12, none of the apparent changes in the percentages of students at or above any of the U.S. history achievement levels from 1994 to 2001 were statistically significant.

Comparing the subgroups' performance in 2001 shows higher percentages of White and Asian/Pacific Islander students than of Black and Hispanic students at or above the *Basic* and *Proficient* levels at all three grades.

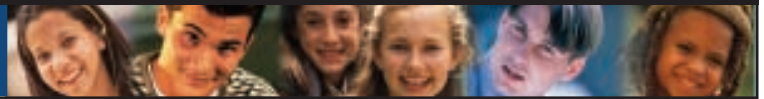
Achievement-level results by race/ethnicity, grades 4, 8, and 12: 1994 and 2001



■ % at or above *Basic*
■ % at or above *Proficient*

★ Significantly different from 1994.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1994 and 2001 U.S. History Assessments.



Average U.S. History Scores by Type of School

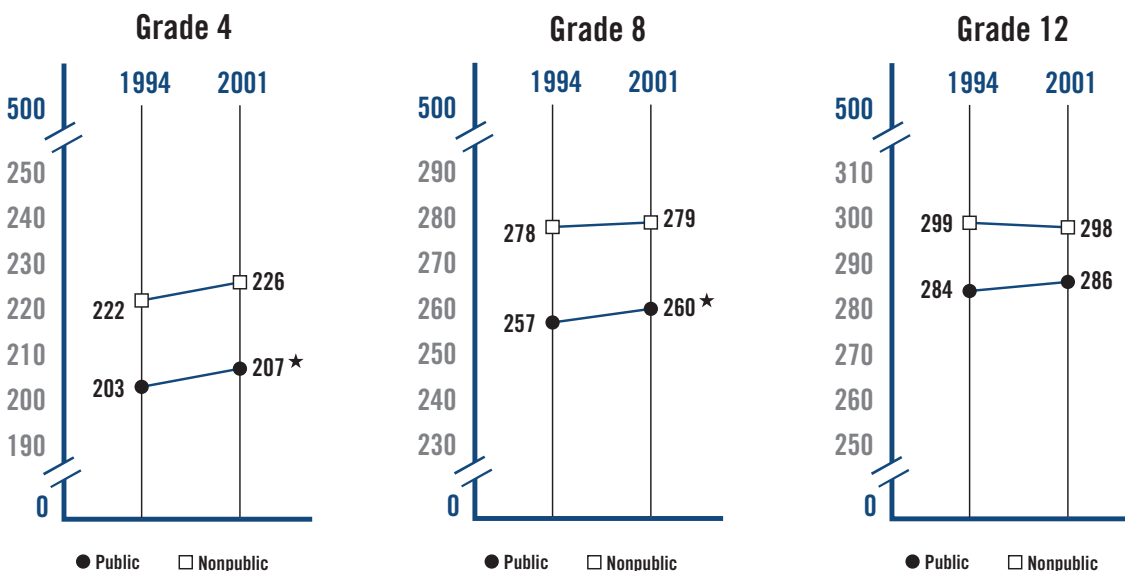
Schools that participate in NAEP assessments are classified as either public or nonpublic. Looking at students' performance within school type indicates that fourth- and eighth-grade public school students' average scores were higher in

2001 than in 1994. The apparent change at grade 12 was not statistically significant. In 2001, as in 1994, fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-graders attending nonpublic schools had higher scores, on average, than their peers attending public schools.

Readers should, however, avoid making assumptions about the comparative quality of instruction in public and nonpublic schools when reading this information. Socioeconomic and sociological factors that may affect student performance should

be considered before interpreting these results. Additional information about the performance of students by type of school can be found in the full report, *The Nation's Report Card: U.S. History 2001*, as well as on the NAEP Web Site at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>.

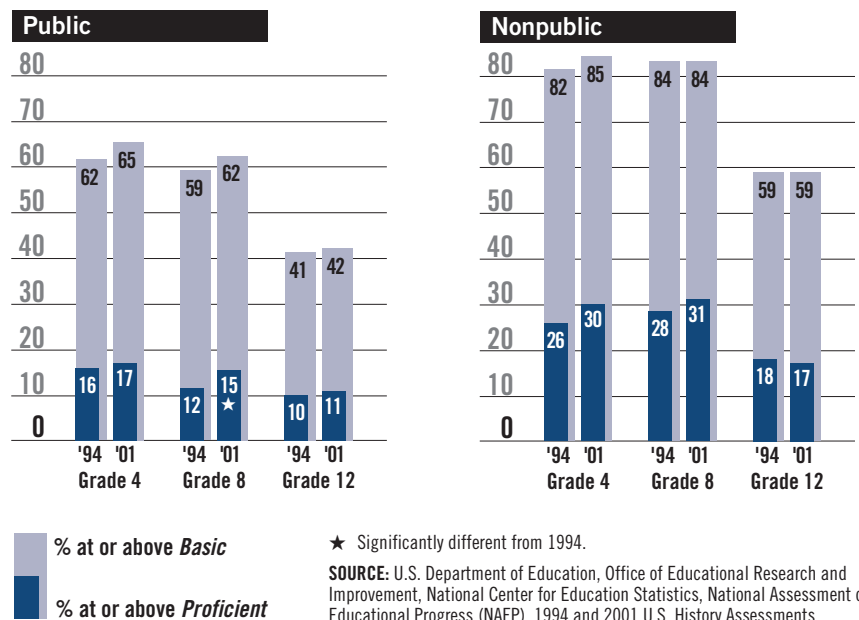
Average U.S. history scale scores by type of school, grades 4, 8, and 12: 1994 and 2001



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1994 and 2001 U.S. History Assessments.

Achievement-Level Results by Type of School

Achievement-level results for students attending public and nonpublic schools are presented in the figures to the right. They indicate that a higher percentage of eighth-grade public school students reached the *Proficient* achievement level in 2001 than in 1994. Comparing student performance by school type in 2001 shows that higher percentages of nonpublic school students than of public school students were at or above the *Basic* and the *Proficient* achievement levels. At grade 8, there was also a higher percentage of students at the *Advanced* achievement level in nonpublic schools than in public schools (data not shown).



Teacher and Student Factors Play a Role in U.S. History Performance

Students who participated in the NAEP 2001 U.S. history assessment and their teachers answered questions related to their background and their experiences at school. The

responses were used to investigate whether relationships exist between these factors and students' performance on the U.S. history assessment. Some of the

findings are presented below and on the next two pages. While these findings may suggest positive or negative relationships between performance and particular factors,

it is important to note that these relationships are not necessarily causal: there are many factors that may play a role in students' U.S. history performance.

Computer Use

Using computers to enhance learning has been an important challenge for educators in all content areas. Students who participated in the NAEP 2001 U.S. history assessment were asked various questions about the ways in which they used computers at school in their history and social studies classes.

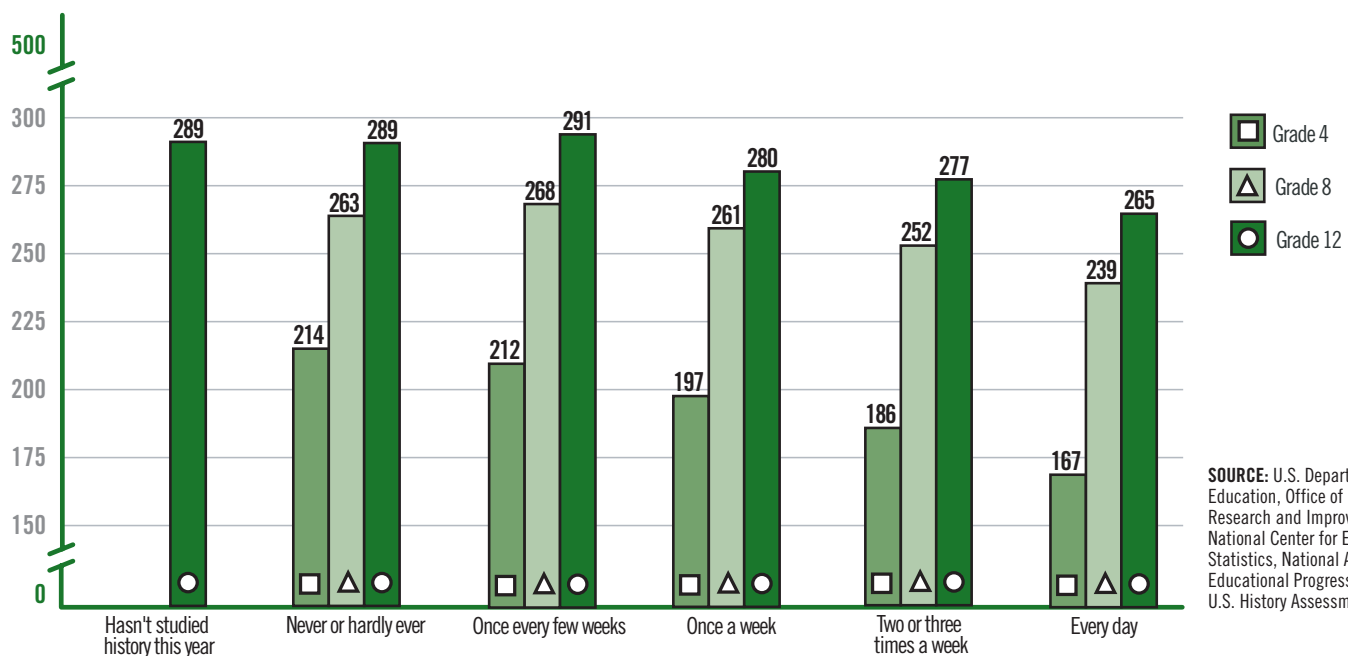
About one-quarter of fourth-graders who participated in the 2001 U.S. history assessment said that they use computers at school for social studies at least once every few weeks. This proportion increased to about one-third at grades 8 and 12.

General Computer Use

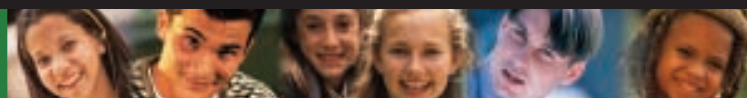
How does the way in which students use computers relate to performance on NAEP? The figure below presents average U.S. history scores for students at grades 4, 8, and 12 by their reports on how frequently they used computers. This question asked students about their use of computers in general for history or social studies, not

about any particular type of computer use. The results indicate a negative relationship between more frequent general use of computers in a social studies or history class and students' performance on the U.S. history assessment. At all three grades, students who reported daily general use had lower average scores than did those who reported less frequent general use.

Average scores by frequency of computer use in social studies or history class, grades 4, 8, and 12: 2001



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2001 U.S. History Assessment.



Specific Computer Use

It should be noted that relatively few students reported using a computer at school for history or social studies—74 percent of fourth-graders, 64 percent of eighth-graders, and 42 percent of twelfth-graders said that they never or hardly ever used a computer in school to study these subjects. An additional 27 percent of twelfth-graders reported not having studied history during the twelfth grade. (Data not

shown.) As shown on the previous page, frequent users also tended to score lowest; however, the results presented below suggest that how the technology is used may matter.

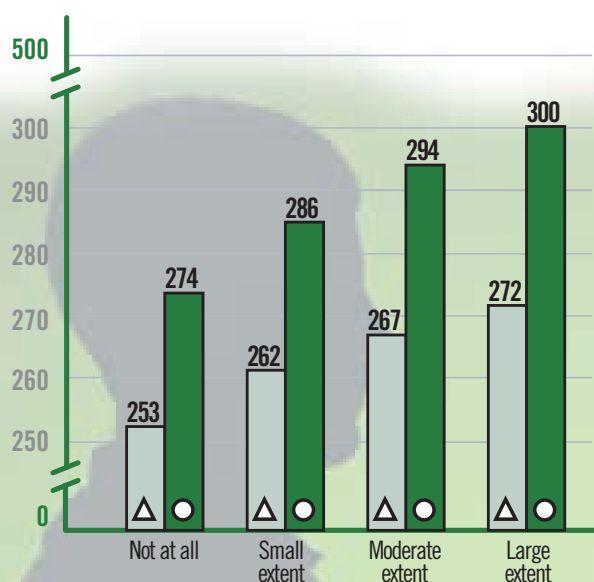
While the figure on the previous page presents results that suggest a negative relationship between frequent general use of computers in history or social studies classes and students' performance, the figures below indicate a

positive relationship at grades 8 and 12 when computers are used for specific activities in such classes. The figure on the left shows that both eighth- and twelfth-graders who used computers to a great extent for research projects by using CDs or the Internet scored higher, on average, than those who did so to a lesser extent. The figure on the right indicates a similar positive relationship: eighth- and twelfth-graders who used

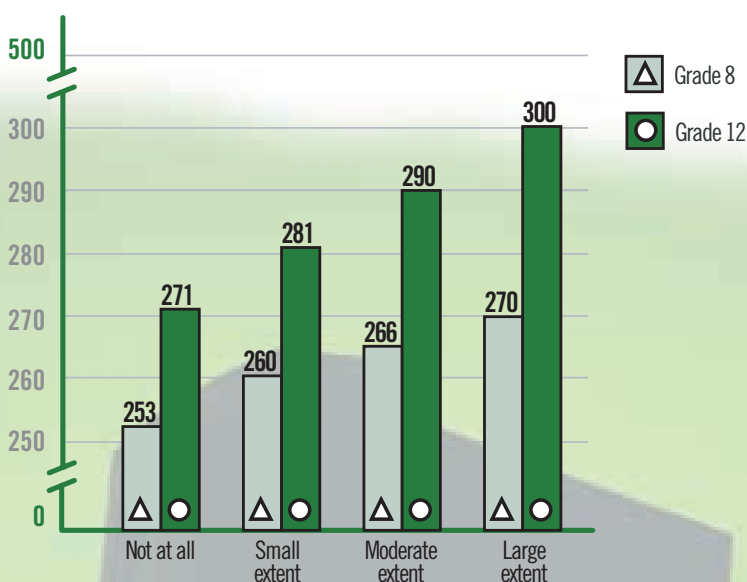
computers to write reports had higher average scores than their peers who did not.

It should be noted that a relationship between computer use and average U.S. history scores cannot, without further investigation, be interpreted causally. Certain types of computer use may support student learning; however, the relationship may also be due to the background and other characteristics of students who are asked to use computers in these ways.

Average scores by time spent using a CD or the Internet for research projects, grades 8 and 12: 2001



Average scores by time spent using the computer to write reports, grades 8 and 12: 2001



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2001 U.S. History Assessment.

Instructional Activities

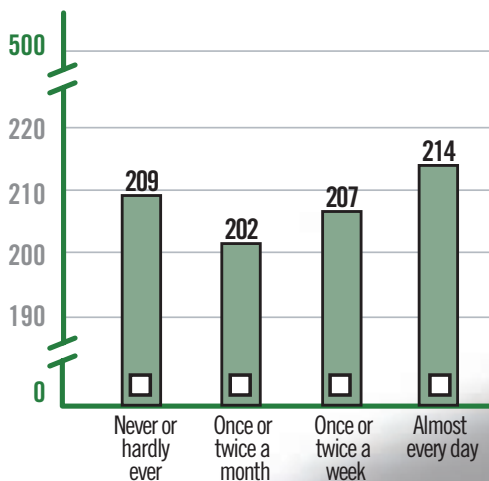
Are certain instructional activities associated with performance on the NAEP 2001 U.S. history assessment? The figures below present the average scores of fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-graders by the frequency of certain instructional activities.

At grade 4, a large majority of students had teachers who reported having them read from a textbook on a daily or weekly basis. Reading from a textbook daily was associated with higher scores on the assessment than was doing so weekly or monthly.

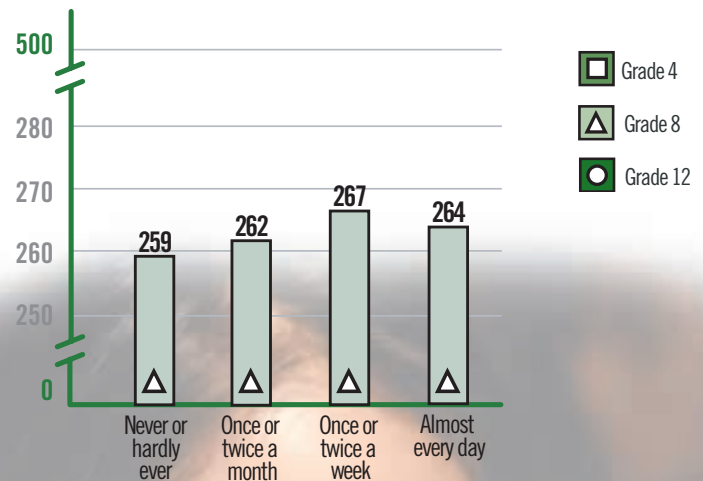
At grade 8, students whose teachers reported using primary historical documents—such as letters, diaries, or essays written by historical figures—once or twice per week had higher scores than those whose teachers reported doing so less frequently or never.

At grade 12, students who reported never reading extra material—such as biographies or historical stories—scored lower than their peers who reported doing so a few times per year or more often.

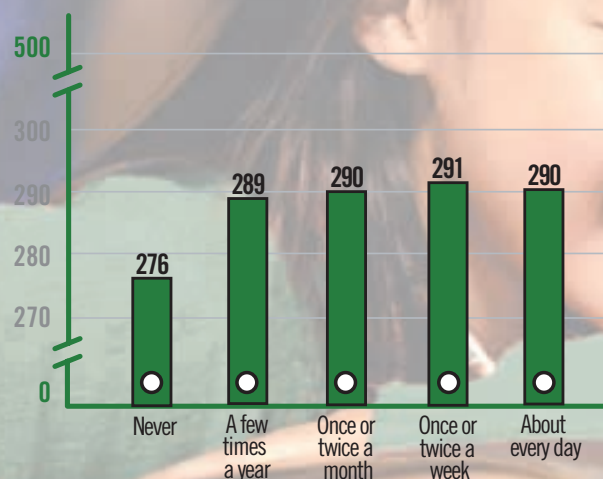
Fourth-grade average scores by frequency of reading material from a textbook: 2001



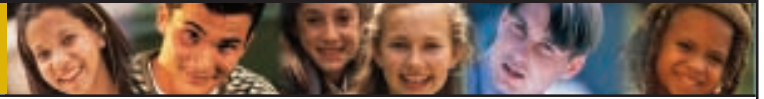
Eighth-grade average scores by frequency of using primary historical documents: 2001



Twelfth-grade average scores by frequency of reading extra material: 2001



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2001 U.S. History Assessment.



Sample U.S. History Questions

A better understanding of students' performance on the NAEP 2001 U.S. history assessment can be gained by examining sample test questions and students' responses to them. The questions shown here—one multiple-choice and one constructed-response question for each grade—were used in the 2001 U.S. history assessment. The

tables that accompany these sample questions show two types of percentages: the overall percentage of students who answered the question successfully and the percentage of students in each achievement-level interval who answered successfully. For the multiple-choice questions shown, the oval corresponding to the correct

multiple-choice response is filled in. For the constructed-response questions, sample student responses are presented along with a brief description of how the response was scored. Because it was a timed test of history knowledge and skills, scoring was based solely on content—students may have made minor spelling and grammatical

errors that would not have affected their score. In addition, the historical theme and historical period being assessed are identified for each sample question. Additional sample questions can be viewed on the NAEP Web Site at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>.

Grade 4 Sample Questions and Responses

Fourth-Grade Multiple-Choice Question

This question asked fourth-grade students about the purpose of an artifact widely used in everyday life during the 19th century.

Overall percentage correct	Percentage correct within achievement-level intervals			
	Below <i>Basic</i> (194 and below*)	<i>Basic</i> (195–242*)	<i>Proficient</i> (243–275*)	<i>Advanced</i> (276 and above*)
93	84	96	99	—

*NAEP U.S. history scale range.

— Sample size insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2001 U.S. History Assessment.



In pioneer schools, feathers like this were most often used for

- ☐ (A) measuring
- ☐ (B) sewing
- ☒ (C) writing
- ☐ (D) playing a game

Historical Theme:

Economic and Technological Changes and Their Relation to Society, Ideas, and the Environment

Historical Period:

Expansion and Reform (1801 to 1861)

Fourth-Grade Extended Constructed-Response Question

Percentage "Essential" or better within achievement-level intervals

Responses to this question were scored according to a four-level guide as

- "Complete";
- "Essential";
- "Partial"; or
- "Inappropriate."

This question asked the student to demonstrate an understanding of how American Indians met basic needs before contact with Europeans and, in addition, to compare the way of life of an American Indian group hundreds of years ago and that of the student's family today.

This "Complete" response correctly listed one way that an American Indian group (circled on map) got food, shelter, and clothing, and one way that the student's own family gets food, shelter, and clothing. It then gave one appropriate reason for differences between the way the American Indian group obtained those necessities and the way in which modern families obtain them.

Overall percentage
"Essential" or better
42

Below *Basic*
(194 and below*)
13

Basic
(195–242*)
48

Proficient
(243–275*)
76

Advanced
(276 and above*)
—

*NAEP U.S. history scale range.

—Sample size insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

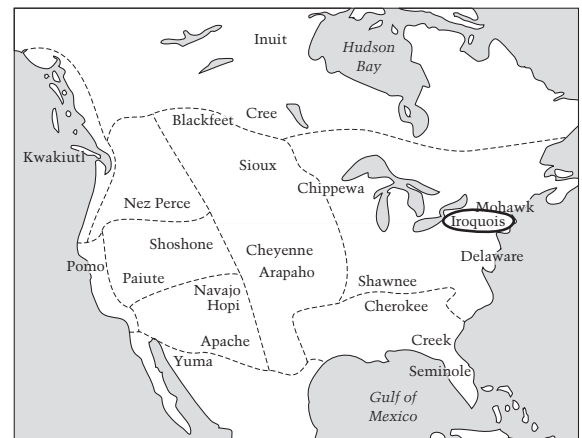
NOTE: The percentage "Essential" or better includes students who scored either "Essential" or "Complete."

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2001 U.S. History Assessment.

Sample "Complete" Response

Choose an American Indian group from the map, and circle its name directly on the map.

On the chart below, list one way this American Indian group got food, shelter, and clothing in the period before Europeans came to the Americas. Then list one way your family gets food, shelter, and clothing.



American Indians in the Period Before Europeans Came

1. Food: They planted food.
2. Shelter: They built houses made of trees
3. Clothing: They used the skin of the animals they killed.

Your Family

1. Food: We go to the supermarket.
2. Shelter: We buy finished built houses.
3. Clothing: We buy from shopping malls.

Give one reason why the American Indian group long ago and your family today differ in the ways they get their food, shelter, or clothing.

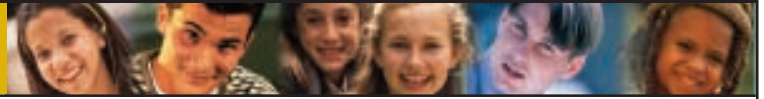
We differ because a long time ago there weren't any stores or real estate people as we have today.

Historical Theme:

The Gathering and Interactions of Peoples, Cultures, and Ideas

Historical Period:

Three Worlds and Their Meeting in the Americas (Beginnings to 1607)



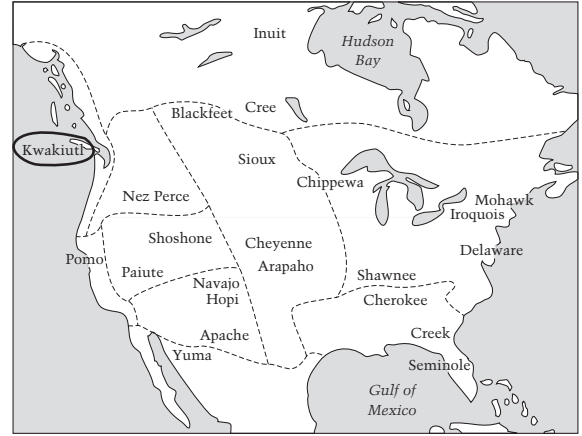
This “Essential” response correctly listed means by which the Kwakiutl (the American Indian group circled on the map) obtained food and clothing, *two* of the necessities listed. The means listed for shelter, “buffalo hide,” is not accurate for the Kwakiutl. The response also listed one way in which the student’s own family obtained food, shelter, and clothing. The reason given for the difference between the way the American Indian group met such basic needs and the way in which modern families meet them was considered too vague to be acceptable.

Fourth-Grade Sample Questions and Responses (continued)

Sample “Essential” Response

Choose an American Indian group from the map, and circle its name directly on the map.

On the chart below, list one way this American Indian group got food, shelter, and clothing in the period before Europeans came to the Americas. Then list one way your family gets food, shelter, and clothing.



American Indians in the Period Before Europeans Came

1. Food: They Hunted
2. Shelter: They used Buffalo hide
3. Clothing: Animal furs

Your Family

1. Food: Grocery Store
2. Shelter: Houses
3. Clothing: Department Stores

Give one reason why the American Indian group long ago and your family today differ in the ways they get their food, shelter, or clothing.

We can buy things today.

Historical Theme:

The Gathering and Interactions of Peoples, Cultures, and Ideas

Historical Period:

Three Worlds and Their Meeting in the Americas (Beginnings to 1607)

Grade 8 Sample Questions and Responses

Eighth-Grade Multiple-Choice Question

This question asked students about the major reason for the colonial American discontent with Great Britain that sparked the formation of the Continental Congress and the consequent Revolution.

Overall percentage
correct
39

Percentage correct within achievement-level intervals

Below *Basic*
(251 and below*)
29

Basic
(252–293*)
39

Proficient
(294–326*)
62

Advanced
(327 and above*)
—

*NAEP U.S. history scale range.

— Sample size insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2001 U.S. History Assessment.

What was the most significant factor that led the American colonists to form the First Continental Congress in 1774?

- ☐ Ⓐ *Religious conflict inside the colonies*
- ☐ Ⓑ *The desire of the colonists to write a Constitution to replace the Articles of Confederation*
- ☒ Ⓒ *Colonial frustration with laws passed by the British Parliament*
- ☐ Ⓓ *The desire of the colonists to stop the war between Britain and the colonies*

Historical Theme:

Change and Continuity in American Democracy:
Ideas, Institutions, Practices, and Controversies

Historical Period:

The Revolution and the New Nation
(1763 to 1815)



sample questions



Eighth-Grade Short Constructed-Response Question

Percentage "Appropriate" within achievement-level intervals

Responses to this question were scored according to a three-level guide as

- "Appropriate";
- "Partial"; or
- "Inappropriate."

This question asked students about one of the most important technological developments affecting 19th-century agriculture.

This "Appropriate" response indicated that the steel plow increased efficiency in agricultural production.

Overall percentage
"Appropriate"
30

Below *Basic*
(251 and below*)
9

Basic
(252–293*)
34

Proficient
(294–326*)
64

Advanced
(327 and above*)
—

*NAEP U.S. history scale range.

— Sample size insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2001 U.S. History Assessment.

Sample "Appropriate" Response

Why was the invention of the steel plow important in United States history?

The steel plow was stronger, lasted longer, worked faster, and could farm harder ground.

Historical Theme:

Economic and Technological Changes and Their Relation to Society, Ideas, and the Environment

Historical Period:

The Development of Modern America (1865 to 1920)



Grade 12 Sample Questions and Responses

Twelfth-Grade Multiple-Choice Question

This question asked students to demonstrate an understanding of the goals of one the most important reform eras in U.S. history.

Percentage correct within achievement-level intervals

Overall percentage
correct
36

Below *Basic*
(293 and below*)
23

Basic
(294–324*)
47

Proficient
(325–354*)
73

Advanced
(355 and above*)
—

*NAEP U.S. history scale range.

— Sample size insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2001 U.S. History Assessment.

The Progressive movement of 1890–1920 is best described as

- ☐ *a broad-based reform movement that tried to reduce the abuses that had come with modernization and industrialization*
- ☐ *a loose coalition of groups primarily dedicated to passing a constitutional amendment prohibiting the consumption of alcohol*
- ☐ *an anti-tariff movement led by a federation of business owners and manufacturers who wanted to promote trade abroad*
- ☐ *a grass-roots movement that attempted to gather support for the establishment of an international organization such as the League of Nations*

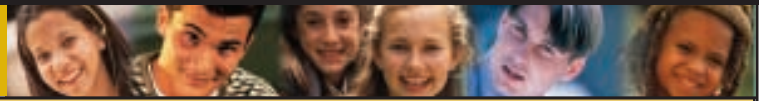
Historical Theme:

Change and Continuity in American Democracy:
Ideas, Institutions, Practices, and Controversies

Historical Period:

The Development of Modern America
(1865 to 1920)

sample questions



Twelfth-Grade Extended Constructed-Response Question

Percentage "Essential" or better within achievement-level intervals

Responses to this question were scored according to a four-level guide as

- "Complete";
- "Essential";
- "Partial"; or
- "Unsatisfactory."

This question asked students to both identify advantages held by the South during the Civil War and explain how those advantages aided the Southern war effort. Students had to provide not only factual information, but also a reasonable argument relating that information to the course of the Civil War.

This "Complete" response identified *two* significant Southern advantages and, in addition, explained how those advantages helped the South.

Overall percentage
"Essential" or better
39

Below *Basic*
(293 and below*)
17

Basic
(294–324*)
62

Proficient
(325–354*)
88

Advanced
(355 and above*)
—

*NAEP U.S. history scale range.

— Sample size insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

NOTE: The percentage "Essential" or better includes students who scored either "Essential" or "Complete."

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2001 U.S. History Assessment.

Sample "Complete" Response

"In spite of the obvious advantages held by the North, the South was able to fight for four years and to achieve some real military successes. So while the North held most of the cards, the South had one or two aces up its sleeves."

Identify two of the "aces" (significant advantages) that the South had in the Civil War. Explain how these advantages helped the South.

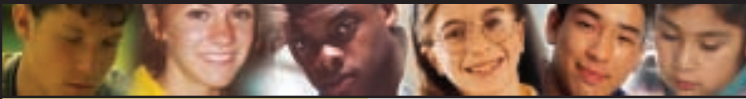
The south did have a couple aces up their sleeves For one they were fighting the war in their home. They were familiar to the territory as well as having a shorter distance to reach supplies the other advantage they had was better military leaders. Robert E. Lee was asked to be the general of the North but he declined and became the South's general.

Historical Theme:

Change and Continuity in American Democracy:
Ideas, Institutions, Practices, and Controversies

Historical Period:

Crisis of the Union: Civil War and Reconstruction
(1850 to 1877)



The “Essential” response identified *one* significant Southern advantage and explained how that advantage helped the South. Both of the reasons listed, that southern soldiers were more familiar with the terrain and that they were more familiar with the weather, help to explain one advantage: fighting on one’s home front.

Sample “Essential” Response

“In spite of the obvious advantages held by the North, the South was able to fight for four years and to achieve some real military successes. So while the North held most of the cards, the South had one or two aces up its sleeves.”

Identify two of the “aces” (significant advantages) that the South had in the Civil War. Explain how these advantages helped the South.

Most of the Civil War was fought on southern land. Therefore the first of the two aces was that the southern soldiers knew the terrain better than the northern soldiers. The second of the two aces was that the southerners were used to the weather and the northerners were not,

Historical Theme:

Change and Continuity in American Democracy:
Ideas, Institutions, Practices, and Controversies

Historical Period:

Crisis of the Union: Civil War and Reconstruction
(1850 to 1877)

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More Information

Additional results and detailed information about the NAEP 2001 U.S. history assessment can be found on the NAEP Web Site. Additional NAEP publications can be ordered from

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