



Achievement Level Descriptors
for
Grade 8 Social Studies

Georgia Department of Education
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Achievement Levels and Achievement Level Descriptors

With the implementation of the Georgia Milestones Assessment System, Georgia educators have developed four achievement levels to describe student mastery and command of the knowledge and skills outlined in Georgia’s content standards. Most students have at least some knowledge of the content described in the content standards; however, achievement levels succinctly describe how much mastery a student has. Achievement levels give meaning and context to scale scores by describing the knowledge and skills students must demonstrate to achieve each level.

The four achievement levels on Georgia Milestones are *Beginning Learner*, *Developing Learner*, *Proficient Learner*, and *Distinguished Learner*. The general meaning of each of the four levels is provided below:

Beginning Learners do not yet demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students **need substantial academic support** to be prepared for the next grade level or course and to be on track for college and career readiness.

Developing Learners demonstrate partial proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students **need additional academic support** to ensure success in the next grade level or course and to be on track for college and career readiness.

Proficient Learners demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students **are prepared** for the next grade level or course and are on track for college and career readiness.

Distinguished Learners demonstrate advanced proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students **are well prepared** for the next grade level or course and are well prepared for college and career readiness.

More detailed and content-specific concepts and skills are provided for each grade, content area, and course in the **Achievement Level Descriptors** (ALDs). ALDs are narrative descriptions of the knowledge and skills expected at each of the four achievement levels and were developed for each grade level, content area, and course by committees of Georgia educators in July 2017 and March 2018. The ALDs are based on the state-adopted content standards.

ALDs show a progression of knowledge and skills for which students must demonstrate competency across the achievement levels. It is important to understand that a student should demonstrate mastery of the knowledge and skills within his/her achievement level *as well as all content and skills in any achievement levels that precede his/her own, if any*. For example, a Proficient Learner should also possess the knowledge and skills of a Developing Learner *and* a Beginning Learner.

POLICY ALDS					
ALD	Standard	Beginning Learner	Developing Learner	Proficient Learner	Distinguished Learner
Policy		Beginning Learners do not yet demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students need substantial academic support to be prepared for the next grade level or course and to be on track for <i>college and career readiness</i>.	Developing Learners demonstrate partial proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students need additional academic support to ensure success in the next grade level or course and to be on track for <i>college and career readiness</i>.	Proficient Learners demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students are prepared for the next grade level or course and are on track for <i>college and career readiness</i>.	Distinguished Learners demonstrate advanced proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students are well prepared for the next grade level or course and are well prepared for <i>college and career readiness</i>.
Range ALDS					
		Beginning Learner	Developing Learner	Proficient Learner	Distinguished Learner
Range		A student who achieves at the Beginning Learner level demonstrates minimal command of the grade-level standards. The pattern exhibited by student responses indicates that students are most likely able to	A student who achieves at the Developing Learner level demonstrates partial command of the grade-level standards. The pattern exhibited by student responses indicates that students are most likely able to	A student who achieves at the Proficient Learner level demonstrates proficiency of the grade-level standards. The pattern exhibited by student responses indicates that students are most likely able to	A student who achieves at the Distinguished Learner level demonstrates advanced proficiency of the grade-level standards. The pattern exhibited by student responses indicates that students are most likely able to
Historical Understandings					
SS8H.1 Evaluate the impact of European exploration and settlement on American Indians in Georgia.					
	8H.1.a 8H.1.b 8H.1.c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify characteristics of American Indians living in Georgia at the time of European contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe characteristics of American Indians living in Georgia at the time of European contact; describe reasons for European exploration and settlement of North America 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe, using various sources, characteristics of American Indians living in Georgia at the time of European contact; explain reasons for European exploration and settlement in America, with emphasis on the British and Spanish in the Southeastern area; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyze, using various sources, the characteristics of American Indians living in Georgia at the time of European contact; analyze, using various sources, the impact of Spanish contact on American Indians

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe, using various sources, the impact of Spanish contact on American Indians 	
SS8H.2 Analyze the colonial period of Georgia's history.					
	8H.2.a 8H.2.b 8H.2.c 8H.2.d 8H.2.e		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify diverse groups settling in Georgia during the Trustee Period; give examples of the kinds of goods and services produced and traded in colonial Georgia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain the Charter of 1732 and the reasons for settlement; describe diverse groups settling in Georgia during the Trustee Period; explain the transition of Georgia into a royal colony 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluate the role of diverse groups in settling Georgia during the Trustee Period
SS8H.3 Analyze the role of Georgia in the American Revolutionary Era.					
	8H.3.a 8H.3.b 8H.3.c 8H.3.d		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify causes of the American Revolution; identify the Declaration of Independence; identify Loyalists and Patriots; identify the Articles of Confederation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain some causes of the American Revolution; explain the parts of the Declaration of Independence; describe the roles of Loyalists and Patriots in Georgia; identify weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain how some causes of the American Revolution impacted Georgia; interpret the three parts of the Declaration of Independence; analyze the significance of Loyalists and Patriots in Georgia; analyze how weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation contributed to the writing of a new federal constitution
SS8H.4 Explain significant factors that affected westward expansion in Georgia between 1789 and 1840.					
	8H.4.a 8H.4.b 8H.4.c 8H.4.d 8H.4.e		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify land policies pursued by Georgia; identify technological developments that had an impact on Georgia's growth; identify William McIntosh; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain reasons for the establishment of the University of Georgia; explain land policies pursued by Georgia; explain how technological developments had an impact on Georgia's growth; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain reasons for the westward movement of Georgia's capitals; evaluate the impact of land policies pursued by Georgia; analyze how key people and events led to the Trail of Tears

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify key people and events that led to the Trail of Tears 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe the role of William McIntosh in the removal of the Creek from Georgia; describe key people and events that led to the Trail of Tears 	
SS8H.5 Analyze the impact of the Civil War on Georgia.					
	8H.5.a 8H.5.b		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify key issues and events that led to the Civil War; identify Georgia's role in the Civil War 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain key issues and events that led to the Civil War; explain Georgia's role in the Civil War 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyze the importance of key issues and events that led to the Civil War
SS8H.6 Analyze the impact of Reconstruction on Georgia.					
	8H.6.a 8H.6.b 8H.6.c 8H.6.d 8H.6.e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments as part of Reconstruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments in general terms; describe the Lincoln, Johnson, and Congressional Reconstruction plans; identify the goals and outcomes of the Freedmen's Bureau or the Ku Klux Klan; give examples of goods and services produced during the Reconstruction Era 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain the roles of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments in Reconstruction; explain key features of the three Reconstruction plans; explain the goals and outcomes of the Freedmen's Bureau and the Ku Klux Klan during Reconstruction; describe the reasons for and the results of the removal of African American/Black legislators from the Georgia General Assembly; describe sharecropping and tenant farming during Reconstruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyze the impact of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments on Reconstruction in Georgia; analyze and compare features of the three Reconstruction plans; compare and contrast the goals and outcomes of the Freedmen's Bureau and the Ku Klux Klan during Reconstruction; examine the reasons for and the results of the removal of African American/Black legislators from the Georgia General Assembly

SS8H.7 Evaluate key political, social, and economic changes that occurred in Georgia during the New South Era.					
	8H.7.a 8H.7.b 8H.7.c 8H.7.d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the New South Era in Georgia's history 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the ways individuals, groups, and events attempted to shape the New South; identify how rights were denied to African Americans/Blacks through political, social, and economic means; identify Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, and Alonzo Herndon; identify antisemitism and resistance to racial equality as shown in the Leo Frank case 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe how individuals, groups and events attempted to shape the New South; explain how Jim Crow laws and other tactics were used to deny rights to African Americans/Blacks; explain the roles of Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, and Alonzo Herndon in advancing the rights of African Americans/Blacks; explain how the Leo Frank case was an example of antisemitism and resistance to racial equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyze methods that were used to deny rights to African Americans/Blacks, including Jim Crow laws, Plessy v. Ferguson, disenfranchisement, and racial violence
SS8H.8 Analyze Georgia's participation in important events that occurred from World War I through the Great Depression.					
	8H.8.a 8H.8.b 8H.8.c 8H.8.d 8H.8.e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the Great Depression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe some factors that led to the Great Depression; identify Eugene Talmadge; identify President Roosevelt's ties to Georgia; identify some New Deal programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe Georgia's contributions to World War I; explain economic factors that led to the Great Depression; describe Eugene Talmadge's opposition to New Deal programs; describe President Roosevelt's ties to Georgia and his impact on the state; describe the effects of the New Deal programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyze Georgia's contributions to World War I; examine the effects of New Deal programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Agricultural Adjustment Act, the Rural Electrification Administration, and the Social Security Administration

SS8H.9 Describe the role of Georgia in WWII.					
	8H.9.a 8H.9.b 8H.9.c		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify key events leading up to American involvement in World War II; identify Richard Russell and Carl Vinson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe the Lend-Lease Act and the bombing of Pearl Harbor as key events leading up to American involvement in World War II; explain the impact of the Bell Bomber Plant, military bases, and shipyards on Georgia during World War II; explain the contributions of Richard Russell and Carl Vinson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluate the purpose and impact of the Bell Bomber Plant, military bases, and shipyards on Georgia during World War II
SS8H.10 Evaluate key post-World War II developments in Georgia.					
	8H.10.a 8H.10.b 8H.10.c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify new agricultural technology after World War II 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe how technology transformed agriculture in Georgia after World War II; identify William B. Hartsfield and Ivan Allen Jr. as mayors of Atlanta 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain how technology transformed agriculture and created a population shift in Georgia; explain how William B. Hartsfield and Ivan Allen Jr. impacted the state; describe the relationship between the end of the white primary and the 1946 governor's race 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluate the relationship between the end of the white primary and the 1946 governor's race
SS8H.11 Evaluate the role of Georgia in the modern civil rights movement.					
	8H.11.a 8H.11.b 8H.11.c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify Brown v. Board of Education as a Supreme Court decision; identify Martin Luther King, Jr. as a key individual in the Civil Rights Movement; identify the 1964 Civil Rights Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe the Brown v. Board of Education decision; identify key individuals, groups, and events in the Civil Rights Movement; describe the resistance to the 1964 Civil Rights Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain the impact of the Brown v. Board of Education decision in Georgia; describe the role of individuals, groups, and events in the Civil Rights Movement; explain the resistance to the 1964 Civil Rights Act, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain Georgia's response to the Brown v. Board of Education decision, the 1956 flag, and the Sibley Commission; evaluate the role of individuals, groups, and events in the Civil Rights Movement

				including the role of Lester Maddox	
SS8H.12 Explain the importance of developments in Georgia since the late 20th century.					
	8H.12.a 8H.12.b 8H.12.c 8H.12.d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify Maynard Jackson and Andrew Young; identify Jimmy Carter; identify the 1996 Olympics in Georgia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe the development of Atlanta under Mayors Maynard Jackson and Andrew Young; describe the role of Jimmy Carter in Georgia as state senator, governor, president, and past president; describe the 1996 Olympics in Georgia; identify Georgia's role in the national and global economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain how development under Atlanta Mayors Maynard Jackson and Andrew Young impacted the state; explain the impact of hosting the 1996 Olympics on Georgia's economic and population growth; describe Georgia's role in the national and global economy with regard to tourism, port expansion, and the film industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluate the impact of hosting the 1996 Olympics on Georgia's economic and population growth; analyze Georgia's role in the national and global economy with regard to tourism, port expansion, and the film industry
Geographic Understandings					
SS8G.1 Describe Georgia's geography and climate.					
	8G.1.a 8G.1.b 8G.1.c 8G.1.d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> locate Georgia in relation to nation and continent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> locate Georgia in relation to region and hemispheres; identify the five geographic regions of Georgia; locate key physical features of Georgia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe the five geographic regions of Georgia in terms of location, climate, and agriculture; explain the importance of key physical features of Georgia; describe the importance of water in Georgia's historical development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> distinguish among the five geographic regions of Georgia in terms of location, climate, agriculture, and economic contribution; analyze the importance of water in Georgia's historical development and economic growth

Government/Civic Understandings**SS8CG.1 Describe the foundations of Georgia's government.**

8CG.1.a 8CG.1.b 8CG.1.c 8CG.1.d 8CG.1.e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify Georgia's three branches of government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe separation of powers and checks and balances; identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens according to the Georgia Constitution; identify wisdom, justice, and moderation as the three principles in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Georgia flag 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify that Georgia's state constitution has a preamble, a bill of rights, and amendments; explain separation of powers and checks and balances within Georgia's government; explain the rights and responsibilities of citizens according to the Georgia Constitution; list voting qualifications for elections in Georgia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain the basic structure of Georgia's state constitution and describe its relationship to the United States Constitution
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SS8CG.2 Analyze the role of the legislative branch in Georgia.

8CG.2.a 8CG.2.b 8CG.2.c 8CG.2.d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the General Assembly as the lawmaking body of Georgia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the qualifications for members of the General Assembly; identify the committee system within the General Assembly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain the qualifications for members of the General Assembly and its role as the lawmaking body of Georgia; describe the purpose of the committee system within the General Assembly; identify the process for making a law in Georgia; describe how state government is funded and how spending decisions are made 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain the process for making a law in Georgia
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SS8CG.3 Analyze the role of the executive branch in Georgia state government.

8CG.3.a 8CG.3.b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the governor and lieutenant governor as leaders of the executive branch in state government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the qualifications for governor and lieutenant governor; identify the role of the executive branch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain the qualifications for governor and lieutenant governor and their roles in the executive branch of state government; 	
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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe how the executive branch fulfills its role through state agencies 	
SS8CG.4 Analyze the role of the judicial branch in Georgia state government.					
	8CG.4.a 8CG.4.b 8CG.4.c 8CG.4.d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify judges as leaders in the judicial branch of state government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify how judges are selected in Georgia; identify an example of criminal law or civil law; identify steps in the adult criminal justice system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe the judicial branch's purposes of interpreting the laws of Georgia and administering justice; explain the difference between criminal law and civil law; explain the steps in the adult criminal justice system, beginning with arrest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyze the judicial branch's purposes of interpreting the laws of Georgia and administering justice
SS8CG.5 Explain how the Georgia court system treats juvenile offenders.					
	8CG.5.a 8CG.5.b 8CG.5.c		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify examples of delinquent and unruly behavior; identify that juveniles in the juvenile justice system have rights; identify the steps in the juvenile justice system when a juvenile is first taken into custody 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain the difference between delinquent and unruly behavior and the consequences of each; describe the rights of juveniles involved in the juvenile justice system; explain the steps in the juvenile justice system 	
SS8CG.6 Analyze the role of local governments in the state of Georgia.					
	8CG.6.a 8CG.6.b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify that there are city, county, and special-purpose governments in Georgia; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe city, county, and special purpose governments in Georgia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe the purposes of city, county, and special-purpose governments in Georgia; describe how local government is funded and how spending decisions are made 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain the origins and purposes of city, county, and special-purpose governments in Georgia

Economic Understandings

SS8E.1 Explain how the four transportation systems (road, air, water, and rail) of Georgia contribute to the development and growth of the state's economy

	8E.1.a 8E.1.b		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognize how the Interstate Highway System, the Hartsfield- Jackson Atlanta International Airport, and Georgia's railroads and deep-water ports support the exchange of goods and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain how the Interstate Highway System, the Hartsfield- Jackson Atlanta International Airport, and Georgia's railroads and deep-water ports support the exchange of goods and services; explain how the four transportation systems provide jobs for Georgians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluate how the Interstate Highway System, the Hartsfield- Jackson Atlanta International Airport, and Georgia's railroads and deep-water ports support the exchange of goods and services, both domestically and internationally
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SS8E.2 Evaluate the influence of Georgia-based businesses on the state's economic growth and development.

	8E.2.a 8E.2.b 8E.2.c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> define profit; define entrepreneur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe how profit is an incentive for entrepreneurs; describe why entrepreneurship involves risk; describe the economic impact of various industries in Georgia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain how entrepreneurs take risks to develop new goods and services to start a business; explain the economic impact of agricultural, entertainment, manufacturing, service, and technology industries in Georgia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluate the economic impact of agricultural, entertainment, manufacturing, service, and technology industries in Georgia
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SS8E.3 Explain the principles of effective personal money management.

	8E.3.a 8E.3.b 8E.3.c 8E.3.d		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify/define income; identify the components of a household budget; identify/define savings; identify/define debt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain that income is a starting point for personal financial management; describe the reasons for and benefits of a household budget; describe the reasons for and benefits of savings; describe the uses of debt and the associated risks 	
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