

# Assessment Brief



Public Schools of North Carolina • State Board of Education • Howard Lee, Chairman • North Carolina Department of Public Instruction • Patricia N. Willoughby, Superintendent

## Understanding the North Carolina End-of-Course Field Tests of Civics and Economics and U. S. History

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*This brief is available on the North Carolina Department of Public Education Testing Section web site, [www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing).*

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### Introduction

In the 1996–1997 school year, the ABCs of Public Education was implemented as a comprehensive plan to reorganize public schools in North Carolina. The ABCs focus on accountability, on the basics and high educational standards, and on maximum local control. To encourage a strong academic emphasis, the state testing program emphasizes the basic skills that all students must master. At the high school level, students are required to take end-of-course tests in the following subjects: Algebra I; Algebra II; Biology; Chemistry; Civics and Economics; English I; Geometry; Physical Science; Physics; and U. S. History. Reading and mathematics skills are assessed at grade 10 through use of the North Carolina High School Comprehensive Test of Reading and Mathematics. Writing skills are assessed at grade 10.

Civics and Economics and U. S. History end-of-course tests will not be offered in 2004–2005 but will be implemented operationally beginning with the 2005–2006 school year.

### Field Test Purposes

The North Carolina EOC Field Tests of Civics and Economics and U.S. History are used to collect general information and data on items and test forms required for test development, to create the score scales, and to set the academic achievement standards (achievement levels) for the tests. The development of a test requires several years of effort. Results from field testing provide valuable information regarding the following:

1. The validity of the tests;
2. The data required to pre-equate test forms;
3. The reliability of the tests;
4. The time to be allotted to administer the tests;
5. The length of the tests;
6. The identification of weak or defective items;
7. The spread of difficulty of the test questions;
8. The appropriateness of the directions for the tests;

9. The detection of item bias;
10. The establishment of the academic achievement standards cut scores as well as which students are likely to be successful in demonstrating mastery versus those who probably will not; and
11. The identification of an appropriate mechanism for scoring and reporting the results of the tests.

Successful administration of the field tests is essential to the continuing development, psychometric, and otherwise technical soundness of the North Carolina End-of-Course Field Tests of Civics and Economics and U.S. History. The participation of the test administrator regarding item review is helpful in providing data to support decision-making relative to additional research, analyses, and test development. Administrators, teachers, and test administrators are to encourage students to take the test seriously and to discuss with students the purpose and importance of field testing based on information provided in this document.

### Eligible Students

Students enrolled in Civics and Economics and U.S. History in schools statewide will participate in the EOC field tests. All eligible students are to participate in the North Carolina EOC field tests in one of the following three ways:

- *Standard test administration;*
- *Standard test administration with accommodations:* On a case-by-case basis and where appropriate documentation exists, students identified as limited English proficient (LEP) and students with disabilities may receive testing accommodations. The need for accommodations must be documented in the student's appropriate LEP documentation, current Individualized Education Program (IEP), or Section 504 plan. The accommodations must be used routinely during the student's instructional program and similar classroom assessments;

- *North Carolina Alternate Assessment Academic Inventory (NCAAAI)*: Data are collected at the beginning of the school year or course (baseline), in the middle (interim), and at the end of the school year or course (final). Per State Board policy HSP-C-005 (16 NCAC 6G .0305), eligible students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency may participate in the NCAAAI instead of taking the multiple-choice test. For a student with disabilities, participation in NCAAAI must be documented in the student's current IEP. Students identified as limited English proficient must meet particular criteria set forth in state policy.

Every effort should be made to ensure that students fully participate. Students who are participating in the North Carolina Alternate Assessment Academic Inventory (NCAAAI) field test for the selected content area do not participate in the multiple-choice field test. Every effort must be made to ensure that all eligible students fully participate.

The remainder of this assessment brief focuses on standard test administrations with or without accommodations.

### Test Forms

Multiple forms of the tests are distributed at each testing site (i.e., classroom). The forms differ in form number (e.g., Form 1); however, each student will take only one form of the test. The field test forms are interleaved (e.g., Form 1, Form 2, Form 3, Form 4, Form 5, Form 6, Form 1, etc.), and no individual student is to be administered more than one form of the field test.

The test books are interleaved (i.e., in a repeating series) by form number. However, one form of the test may be administered to a group of students when (1) students with disabilities or students identified as limited English proficient are to have the test read aloud (in English) as a testing accommodation or (2) an interpreter/transliterator signs/cues a test to students with disabilities as an accommodation. A different form of the test should be used for each of these sessions within a school.

### Students Record Actual Working Time

All students who participate in the end-of-course field tests are required to record their actual working time on SIDE 2 of the answer sheet. The TIME box must be completed accurately because this data will be used to estimate the total test administration time for each of the end-of-course tests. The test administrator is to follow specific procedures to facilitate this recording process. These procedures, which must be studied carefully by the test administrator prior to the day of testing, are specified in the Test Administrator's Manual.

It is important to remember that all students are to be given sufficient time to complete the test administration. Test administrators must consult with school test coordinators for the local procedure to follow in providing students with additional time to in cases where students need the

additional time in order to complete the end-of-course field test.

### Field Test Header and Item Review Sheet

As with all End-of-Course Field Tests, teachers who teach the end-of-course subjects, special education teachers, and English as a second language teachers are asked to review the quality of the end-of-course multiple-choice field test questions for *one form of the test* by completing the North Carolina U. S. History/Civics and Economics Field Test Item Review Sheet (attached to the header sheet) and page 1 of the header sheet. This review should take less than one hour to complete. If the review cannot be completed on the day of testing, the school test coordinator will make other arrangements to ensure that the appropriate teachers have an opportunity to complete the Item Review Sheet

### Estimated Test Administration Time

It is anticipated that most students will complete the field test between 135 and 162 minutes. However, the estimated administration time for the field test is 150 minutes. All students should be allowed ample opportunity to complete the field test. Accurate test administration time data must be gathered to provide information regarding operational testing procedures.

The following table provides the suggested testing time for the end-of-course field test:

Time	Testing Activity
8 minutes	Assemble students, distribute answer sheets, and provide general instructions.
60 minutes	Administer multiple-choice field test.
2 minutes	Stretch break
60 minutes	Administer multiple-choice field test.
2 minutes	Stretch break
30 minutes (estimated)	Complete administration of multiple-choice field test
162 minutes	Estimated Total Testing Time

Note: Additional time may be required at the end of the testing period to collect test materials, check answer sheets, and complete coding.

### Number of Test Items by End-of-Course Test

The following table provides the approximate number of test items located on each end-of-course field test:

End-of-Course Test	Number of Items
Civics and Economics	100
U.S. History	100

*In compliance with federal law, including the provisions of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, NC Public Schools administers all state-operated educational programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination because of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, color, age, military service, disability, or gender, except where exemption is appropriate and allowed by law.*