



# GEE 21

Graduation Exit Examination  
for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

## Released Test Items:

Sample Student Work Illustrating GEE 21  
Achievement Levels

July 2004

## Grade 11



## Social Studies



LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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**Louisiana’s Graduation Exit Examination  
for the 21st Century (GEE 21)**

**GRADE 11 SAMPLE ITEMS AND STUDENT WORK  
2003–2004**

GEE 21 is an integral part of the Louisiana school and district accountability system passed by the state legislature and signed into law in 1997. The primary purposes of the accountability system are to raise expectations for achievement for all Louisiana public school students and to improve public education in the state.

In March 2004, students in grade 11 took GEE 21 Science and Social Studies tests. The test scores are combined with other relevant data to create school and district accountability scores, which serve as a means of measuring educational quality and improvement in educational programs over time.

This document is part of a series of materials meant to promote understanding of the knowledge and skills students must have and the kinds of work they must produce to be successful on the GEE 21. A list of other documents providing background and further information on the GEE 21 tests can be found on the Louisiana Department of Education Web site at [www.louisianaschools.net](http://www.louisianaschools.net).

### **GEE 21 Reports**

Louisiana’s high school students are tested each year in March. Individual student, school, district, and state test results are released in phases in May and July. School and district accountability results are reported in the fall.

For GEE 21, student scores are reported at five achievement levels: *Advanced*, *Mastery*, *Basic*, *Approaching Basic*, and *Unsatisfactory*. The percentage of students scoring at each level is reported for individual schools, districts, and the state. General definitions for achievement levels are given on page 2. Specific definitions of achievement levels for the Social Studies test were published in the 2002 Released Items documents. The achievement level definitions for all content areas can be found on the Louisiana Department of Education Web site at [www.louisianaschools.net](http://www.louisianaschools.net). Click on the “Testing” link below the tabs at the top of the page, then on the “Achievement Levels” link at the left of the page.

**GEE 21**  
**General Achievement Level Definitions**

<b>Achievement Level</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Advanced</b>	A student at this level has demonstrated superior performance beyond the level of mastery.
<b>Mastery</b>	A student at this level has demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter and is well prepared for the next level of schooling.
<b>Basic</b>	A student at this level has demonstrated only the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.
<b>Approaching Basic</b>	A student at this level has only partially demonstrated the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	A student at this level has not demonstrated the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.

**Purpose of This Document**

This document presents student work in the Social Studies test, which was completed as part of a GEE 21 assessment. The document includes multiple-choice and constructed-response items that exemplify what students scoring at specified achievement levels should know and be able to do. A discussion of each item highlights knowledge and skills it is intended to measure, as well as strengths and weaknesses in the student work on the item.

As you review the items, it is important to remember that a student's achievement level is based on his or her *total test score* (cumulative score for all questions in the test) in a content area, *not* on one particular item or section, and that sample items included in this report represent a *small* portion of the body of knowledge and skills measured by the GEE 21 tests. Additional items will be released in future years of the GEE 21.

## Social Studies

The GEE 21 Social Studies test is composed of sixty multiple-choice and four constructed-response items. A student earns one point for each correct answer to a multiple-choice item and from 0 to 4 points for the answer and work shown for each constructed-response item.

The general scoring rubric for constructed-response items is:

Score	Description
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The student's response demonstrates in-depth understanding of the relevant content and/or procedures.</li><li>The student completes all important components of the task accurately and communicates ideas effectively.</li><li>Where appropriate, the student offers insightful interpretations and/or extensions.</li><li>Where appropriate, the student uses more sophisticated reasoning and/or efficient procedures.</li></ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The student completes most important aspects of the task accurately and communicates clearly.</li><li>The student's response demonstrates an understanding of major concepts and/or processes, although less important ideas or details may be overlooked or misunderstood.</li><li>The student's logic and reasoning may contain minor flaws.</li></ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The student completes some parts of the task successfully.</li><li>The student's response demonstrates gaps in conceptual understanding.</li></ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The student completes only a small portion of the task and/or shows minimal understanding of the concepts and/or processes.</li></ul>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The student's response is incorrect, irrelevant, too brief to evaluate, or blank.</li></ul>

**Note:** It is important to recognize that score points for constructed-response items and GEE 21 achievement levels do not share a one-to-one correspondence. For example, it should *not* be assumed that a student who scores at the *Mastery* level in the test has earned a score of 3 on each constructed-response item.

It is possible for a high school student to earn a total of 76 points on the GEE 21 Social Studies test. The number of raw score points that a student would have to achieve to reach each achievement level may change slightly from year to year, given the difficulty of that particular form of the test. The spring 2004 raw score range for each achievement level is listed on the following page.

## Spring 2004 Social Studies Test

<b>Achievement Level</b>	<b>Raw Score Range</b>
Advanced	69 – 76 points
Mastery	59 – 68.5 points
Basic	39.5 – 58.5 points
Approaching Basic	30.5 – 39 points
Unsatisfactory	0 – 30 points

This document presents four multiple-choice items, one taken from each of the four strands in the social studies assessment framework—**Geography, History, Civics, and Economics**. In addition, the items were selected because they illustrate results from four of the five achievement levels used to report GEE 21 results—*Advanced, Mastery, Basic, and Approaching Basic*. Examples of *Unsatisfactory* work are not included; by definition, work classified as *Unsatisfactory* exhibits a narrower range of knowledge and skills than work classified as *Approaching Basic*. In addition, one constructed-response item with its scoring rubric and sample student responses at score points 0 to 4 are included. Each student response is annotated to explain how the score was derived and the strengths and weaknesses of the response.

This document presents items that students completed as part of a GEE 21 assessment. The information shown for each item includes

- the correct answer,
- the achievement level or score point,
- the standard and benchmark each item measures, and
- commentary on the skills/knowledge measured by the item.

**Note:** Test items may have been reduced in size for this document. Font size on the GEE 21 assessments is typically 12 point.

**Grade 11—Social Studies  
Multiple-Choice Items**

**Reporting Category:** Geography

**Benchmark G-1B-H1:** Determining how location and social, cultural, and economic processes affect the features and significance of places

**Achievement Level:** *Advanced*

**Use the following information to answer question X.**

Think about the major conflicts of the twentieth century which the United States has been involved in.

- World War I
- World War II
- Korea
- Vietnam

In spite of fighting four major wars, there has been very little physical damage done to the continental United States. Which of the following would **best** explain why there was so little physical damage?

- A. the United States' diplomatic actions
- \* B. the United States' geographic location
- C. the United States' diverse population
- D. the United States' military power

\* correct answer

This geography item would most likely be answered correctly by students who are at the *Advanced* level. Students must analyze the affects of several twentieth century conflicts and determine the impact of geography on them. While the United States' diplomacy, diversity, and military power certainly had some impact on each of the conflicts, it was only the nation's geographic location, so distant from the battlegrounds of these conflicts, that prevented extensive physical damage.

**Reporting Category:** History

**Benchmark H-1B-H8:** Evaluating the significance of the Progressive Movement

**Achievement Level:** *Mastery*

**Use the following passage to answer question X.**

“Reformers sought to contain the power of the trusts, protect the rights of workers and consumers, and make life more secure for everyone. This group wanted to tame and regulate capitalism but did not want to eliminate it. The ultimate goal was to improve the working conditions of the masses but not give them political control.”

This passage about a reform movement describes which political ideology?

- A. nationalism
- B. socialism
- \* C. progressivism
- D. communism

\* correct answer

This history item would most likely be answered correctly by students who are at the *Mastery* level and above. Students use a passage about nineteenth century reform to identify the ideology of the Progressive Movement, which was devoted to improving the lot of the working class through education, improved health, and a greater economic share of the nation’s wealth. The positive relationship between reform and capitalism expressed in the passage should lead students to the correct answer.

**Reporting Category:** Civics

**Benchmark C-1B-H6:** Analyzing the historical and contemporary roles of associations and groups in local, state, and national politics

**Achievement Level:** *Basic*

**Use the following statements to answer question X.**

- These individuals work in Washington, D.C., and all state capitals.
- These individuals work for either businesses and private interest groups that support specific causes that interest some citizens, or for public interest groups that strive for improvements that benefit all citizens.
- These individuals try to persuade lawmakers to consider the opinions of the groups they represent.

The statements above describe which occupation?

- A. elector
- \* B. lobbyist
- C. entrepreneur
- D. lawyer

\* correct answer

This civics item would most likely be answered correctly by students who are at the *Basic* level and above. Students must use a bulleted list of purposes and activities and identify them as characteristic of lobbyists. Students must identify an elector as someone who casts votes in the presidential election, entrepreneur as an economic term not consistent with the context, and lawyer as someone whose purposes and activities are beyond the limited scope of a lobbyist.

**Reporting Category:** Economics

**Benchmark E-1A-H1:** Analyzing the impact of the scarcity of productive resources and examining the choices and opportunity cost that result

**Achievement Level:** *Approaching Basic*

The basic economic problem that all individuals, businesses, and governments must solve is

- \* A. satisfying unlimited wants with limited resources.
- B. guaranteeing that everyone has a bank account.
- C. making sure all resources are used.
- D. updating jobs to take advantage of the newest technology.

\* correct answer

This economics item would most likely be answered correctly by students who are at the *Approaching Basic* level and above. Students must identify the single economic problem common to all sectors of the economy. Guaranteeing that everyone has a bank account is not an economic problem. Making sure all resources are used is a goal primarily of business. Updating jobs to take advantage of the newest technology is a goal of business and government. Satisfying unlimited wants with limited resources is the only option that is a basic economic problem affecting individuals, businesses, and governments.

## Grade 11—Social Studies Constructed-Response Item

A social studies constructed-response item for a GEE 21 test may require students to write an extended answer in response to a question, direction, or other prompt. Frequently, constructed-response items are multipart items; in addition to writing, students are asked to work with graphics or other materials.

The item, scoring rubric, and sample student responses are shown on this and the following pages. Student responses at each score point (0 to 4) are annotated to explain how each score was derived and the strengths and weaknesses of the responses.

**Reporting Category:** Economics

**Benchmark E-1B-H3:** Analyzing the impact of governmental taxation, spending, and regulation on different groups in a market economy

A **local government** is considering these items in its proposed budget:

- building a new community hospital
- maintaining welfare payments at current levels
- providing financial incentives to businesses to hire more teenage workers
- replacing an unsafe, worn-out bridge
- supporting parks and recreational services year-round

Because money is limited, not all of the above items can be included in the budget.

- A.** Select **one** item that you feel should be included in the community budget. Explain **two** ways that the item you selected may have a **positive economic** impact on the community. Use specific details in your discussion.
- B.** Select **another** item that you feel should be included in the community budget. Discuss **two** ways that the item you selected might have a **negative economic** impact on the community if it were **not** included in the budget.

## Scoring Rubric

Maximum points to be awarded per section: part a—2 points, part b—2 points.

Score	Description
4	<p><i>General:</i> Response reflects an in-depth understanding of the positive and negative economic effects government spending on projects and programs can have on a community.</p> <p><i>Specific:</i> Response gives a complete and accurate answer for all four parts of the question, explaining two positive economic impacts of funding one community budget item (2), and explaining two negative economic impacts of rejecting a different community budget item (2).</p>
3	<p><i>General:</i> Response reflects a general understanding of the positive and negative economic effects government spending on projects and programs can have on a community.</p> <p><i>Specific:</i> Response gives a general answer for all four parts of the question</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Response gives a thorough/accurate answer for at least two parts of the question but a limited answer for the other parts.</p>
2	<p><i>General:</i> Response reflects a limited understanding of the positive and negative economic effects government spending on projects and programs can have on a community <b>OR</b> student does not answer all four parts of the question.</p> <p><i>Specific:</i> Response answers all four parts of the question, but has reversed parts a and b (giving negative in part a and positive in part b) and does not indicate answer was reversed.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Response answers only three parts of the question with general answers.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Response answers only two parts of the question, but gives thorough/accurate answers.</p>
1	<p><i>General:</i> Response reflects a minimal understanding of the positive and negative economic effects government spending on projects and programs can have on a community.</p> <p><i>Specific:</i> Response answers one part of the question.</p>
0	<p>Response is incorrect or contains some correct work that is irrelevant to the skill or concept being measured.</p>
<b>Blank</b>	<p>No response.</p>

**Note:** General and limited answers do not fully explain the economic impact on the community.

## Scoring Notes—Economic Effects of Local Budget Programs

<b>Budget Item</b>	<b>Positive Impact</b>	<b>Negative Impact (many are just opposite of positive)</b>
Build hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction jobs</li> <li>• Hospital jobs</li> <li>• Local health care would make community more attractive to new residents and businesses</li> <li>• Less time lost by citizens traveling to a more distant hospital</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People not as healthy; cost to businesses</li> <li>• People and business less likely to move to community</li> </ul>
Maintain welfare payments at current levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will have money and continue to be consumers</li> <li>• Being better able to provide for themselves will have a positive economic effect on the community</li> <li>• Less likely to resort to crime</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer consumers for businesses</li> <li>• Decrease in funding for social programs</li> <li>• Increase in crime</li> </ul>
Provide incentives for businesses to hire teens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeps teens busy and less likely to vandalize or keep consumers away because they are hanging out downtown</li> <li>• Teens provide relatively low-cost labor for businesses</li> <li>• Teens will have money and will be consumers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in vandalism</li> <li>• Smaller labor force may force up business costs</li> </ul>
Replace bridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction jobs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will cost more to replace later</li> <li>• Without the bridge, people would have to travel a greater distance</li> <li>• Unsafe bridge could cause accidents and lead to lawsuits</li> </ul>
Continue recreational services year round	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeps teens busy and less likely to vandalize or keep consumers away because they are hanging out downtown</li> <li>• Year-round programs would make community more attractive to new residents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teens won't be kept busy and will therefore be more likely to commit vandalism or keep consumers away because they are hanging out downtown</li> </ul>

## Score 4

- A. Select **one** item that you feel should be included in the community budget. Explain **two** ways that the item you selected may have a **positive economic** impact on the community. Use specific details in your discussion.

The item of providing financial incentives to businesses to hire more teenage workers should be included. First, more workers equals more production from businesses. Second, with more people making money, more people will be spending it.

- B. Select **another** item that you feel should be included in the community budget. Discuss **two** ways that the item you selected might have a **negative economic** impact on the community if it were **not** included in the budget.

The replacement of an unsafe, worn-out bridge should also be included. If this bridge collapses after the budget is spent, people would have a harder time getting to work. Second, this replacement would have made way for bridge labor jobs, which would have added to the economy.

This response gives complete and accurate answers for all four parts of the question. Part A selects one item proposed in the budget (“providing financial incentives to businesses to hire more teenage workers”) and explains two ways that it would have a positive economic impact on the community. Part B selects another item (“replacing an unsafe, worn-out bridge”) and explains two negative economic effects of not including it in the budget (a collapse would make it so “people would have a harder time getting to work” and failure to replace the bridge will cost the community potential construction jobs). Overall, this response reflects an in-depth understanding of economic effects of government spending on projects and programs in communities.

### Score 3

- A. Select **one** item that you feel should be included in the community budget. Explain **two** ways that the item you selected may have a **positive economic** impact on the community. Use specific details in your discussion.

I have decided that providing financial incentives to businesses to hire more teenage workers can be very beneficial to the local economy. Doing so would result in less delinquency due to the reduced free-time of those hired. It would also boost the economy's GDP and provide an incentive to teens for earning money, so they could spend it.

- B. Select **another** item that you feel should be included in the community budget. Discuss **two** ways that the item you selected might have a **negative economic** impact on the community if it were **not** included in the budget.

If replacing an unsafe bridge were to be left out, the consequences would be disastrous. Suppose a line of vehicles became backed up on the bridge. The bridge would fall causing numerous injuries and/or fatalities resulting in tragedy. Worst yet, taxes would rise so the economy could pay for construction of a new bridge.

This response reflects a general understanding of the question. Part A explains two ways (one thorough/accurate and one limited) that providing financial incentives to businesses to hire more teenage workers could have a positive economic impact on the community. The first way is limited because the positive economic impact of “less delinquency” is not fully explained. However, the second way clearly explains a positive effect on the economy. Part B also provides one thorough/accurate answer and one limited answer. The first effect of not replacing the bridge (“injuries and/or fatalities”) is limited because the economic impact isn’t clear, but the second effect’s negative impact on the economy is thoroughly explained.

## Score 2

- A. Select **one** item that you feel should be included in the community budget. Explain **two** ways that the item you selected may have a **positive economic** impact on the community. Use specific details in your discussion.

I believe that providing financial incentives to businesses to hire more teenage workers would have a positive economic impact on the community because more teenagers would have money to buy more goods and teenagers would receive lessons in economic responsibilities molding them into economically intelligent adults.

- B. Select **another** item that you feel should be included in the community budget. Discuss **two** ways that the item you selected might have a **negative economic** impact on the community if it were **not** included in the budget.

I believe that maintaining welfare payments at current levels would have a negative economic impact because more people would want to quit their jobs and go on welfare thus prohibiting them from purchasing luxury items and recreational services as well as having other peoples taxes going to waste on other things such as road construction and educational programs

This response provides thorough/accurate answers for two parts of the question. Part A explains two ways that providing financial incentives to businesses to hire more teenage workers would have a positive economic impact on the community (“more teenagers would have more money to buy more goods” and “teenagers would receive lessons in economic responsibilities”). The answers to part B are irrelevant and receive no credit because they discuss possible negative economic impacts on the community if the item selected (“maintaining welfare payments at current levels”) **had been** included, rather than **not** included in the budget as specified by the question.

**Score 1**

- A. Select **one** item that you feel should be included in the community budget. Explain **two** ways that the item you selected may have a **positive economic** impact on the community. Use specific details in your discussion.

• Building a new community hospital  
It can employ more people with a good nursing skill to work

- B. Select **another** item that you feel should be included in the community budget. Discuss **two** ways that the item you selected might have a **negative economic** impact on the community if it were **not** included in the budget.

This response answers one part of the question. Part A selects the building of a new community hospital and explains one positive economic impact of including that item in the budget (“It can employ more people”).

**Score 0**

- A. Select **one** item that you feel should be included in the community budget. Explain **two** ways that the item you selected may have a **positive economic** impact on the community. Use specific details in your discussion.

SUPPORTING PARKS AND RECREATIONAL  
SERVICES YEAR-ROUND

- B. Select **another** item that you feel should be included in the community budget. Discuss **two** ways that the item you selected might have a **negative economic** impact on the community if it were **not** included in the budget.

BUILDING A NEW COMMUNITY  
HOSPITAL

The answers to parts A and B of this response are irrelevant to the concept being measured. They demonstrate no understanding of the economic effects of government spending on projects and programs in communities.





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**Louisiana Department of Education  
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