



Teacher's Guide

U.S. History and the Constitution Examination

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Introduction

The South Carolina Education Accountability Act (EAA) of 1998 requires that end-of-course examinations be administered to students in gateway courses. In order to fulfill this EAA mandate, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) has instituted the South Carolina End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP).

The purposes and uses of the EOCEP tests are as follows:

- A. The tests promote instruction in specific academic standards for the particular courses, encourage higher levels of student achievement, and document the level of students' mastery of the curriculum.
- B. The tests serve as indicators of program, school, and school district effectiveness in the manner prescribed by the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) in accordance with the provisions of the EAA.
- C. The tests are weighted 20 percent in the determination of students' final grades in the gateway courses.

The South Carolina end-of-course examinations are multiple-choice tests based on written test specifications that are directly linked to South Carolina academic standards. The test questions are designed and constructed to assess the skills, abilities, and knowledge referenced in the standards. In addition, test questions are designed to assess higher order thinking skills by addressing cognitive process levels beyond the simple recall level of the revised Bloom's taxonomy. As a result, the majority of the test items are at the Understand cognitive process level with the remainder being at the Apply or Analyze level of the revised Bloom's taxonomy.

Care is taken in creating possible responses so that each question has one correct answer and three incorrect options that represent common errors in reasoning. The test questions are not meant to be tricky; rather, they are designed to distinguish between those students who understand the concept or skill being tested and can apply their understanding and those students who have an incomplete understanding of the concept. Students who understand the concept will likely choose the correct option, while those with an incomplete understanding are more likely to choose an incorrect but plausible option that is based on a common misconception.

All test questions are carefully reviewed by content experts, language and special needs experts, and testing experts to ensure that each test question properly measures the intended standard. Test questions are also carefully reviewed so that test-wise students cannot find unintended clues to the correct option. In addition, the South Carolina Sensitivity Review Committee scrutinizes the test to ensure that each question is free from bias with respect to race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, culture, and geographic region as well as content that would be offensive to any cultural, religious, or ethnic group. The items are then field-tested to further ensure item validity.

This *Teacher's Guide* has been developed to provide educators with important information about the EOCEP and to explain how it can be used to strengthen teaching and learning in South Carolina. The guide provides a description of the test that encompasses its purpose and structure,

its role in the EOCEP, and the course standards that guided its development. In addition, the guide provides sample questions and practical suggestions about how to prepare students for the examination.

The South Carolina Social Studies Academic Standards, which include the United States History and the Constitution standards for the end-of-course examination, can be found at the Office of Assessment's Web site:

<http://ed.sc.gov/agency/ac/Assessment/End-of-CourseExaminationProgramEOCEP.html>

The State Board of Education regulation concerning the EOCEP (R 43-262.4, "End-of-Course Tests") can be found on the South Carolina Department of Education Web site:

http://ed.sc.gov/agency/stateboard/regs/article_19/262-4.doc

Additional information on the EAA is provided on the SC Legislature Online Web site:

<http://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t59c018.htm>

Part 1

Overview of the Examination

The test questions on the U.S. History and the Constitution examination are aligned with the South Carolina U.S. History and the Constitution course standards and are designed to assess students' mastery of these standards. These course standards—and therefore the examination questions—encompass topics in U.S. History and the Constitution from the settlement of North America through recent U.S. foreign and domestic policy.

The U.S. History and the Constitution examination is composed of 55 multiple-choice test items. Students are given sufficient time in the testing session to attempt every question on the test.

Basic Questions Teachers Have About the Examination and the EOCEP

Who decided what the examination covers?

The examination is based on the U.S. History and the Constitution course standards that are set forth in the *South Carolina Social Studies Academic Standards 2011*. A committee of South Carolina educators and leaders developed these standards; questions to measure students' mastery of these standards were developed specifically for this examination.

Who takes this examination?

The examinations developed and administered through the EOCEP test the course standards addressed in Algebra 1/Mathematics for the Technologies 2, English 1, Biology 1/Applied Biology 2, and U.S. History and the Constitution. Students (high school, adult education, or home school) enrolled in these courses or any other courses that address these academic standards must take the corresponding test. The test is a requirement regardless of whether the course is unit bearing.

When do students take the test?

Students take the test at the completion of the course. Each district determines a testing schedule within parameters set by the state.

How are home school students tested?

The end-of-course tests are part of the statewide testing program, and home school students approved by the district are required to participate. Students take the test during the first scheduled administration following the completion of the course.

Why do students have to take the examination?

The EAA requires the development of end-of-course examinations in the gateway courses. These examinations serve as indicators of program, school, and school district effectiveness, promote instruction in specific academic standards, and encourage higher levels of student achievement.

They may be used as final examinations for these courses. The test scores must comprise 20 percent of the students' final grades in these courses.

What accommodations are offered for students with disabilities?

Accommodations, modifications, and customized materials are available for the EOCEP for students with documented disabilities. For South Carolina assessment programs, the term “accommodation” is defined as a change in the testing environment, procedures, or presentation that does not alter in any significant way what the test measures and does not affect the comparability of scores. The purpose of accommodations is to enable students to participate in testing in a way that allows knowledge and skills to be assessed rather than disabilities.

The following are examples of permissible testing accommodations:

- small-group or individual administration;
- extended time, afternoon administration, frequent breaks in testing;
- highlighting, cues, reading aloud to self, repeating/signing directions, oral/signed administration, and customized forms;
- administration of the test over several sessions or several days;
- special lighting or furniture, supplemental materials and devices; and
- alternate response modes, such as responding in the test booklets, using bold-lined paper, typing responses, and making nonverbal responses.

Modifications are available as appropriate. The term “modification” refers to any change in the testing process that compromises the validity and alters the meaning and comparability of the test scores. Modifications are appropriate only for those students who, owing to the nature of their disabilities, are unable to take the examination without modifications. The testing modifications should be the same as the modifications used by the students in routine instruction and assessment.

Appropriate customized materials such as large-print, Braille, and script versions will be available, as needed, for operational (i.e., non-field-test) administrations of the end-of-course examinations.

Is the test timed?

The test is not timed. It is administered in a test session of approximately ninety minutes, which should be sufficient for all students to have the opportunity to attempt every question on the test. Test administrators are instructed to make every effort to give students sufficient time to complete the test.

How are the scores from the EOCEP factored into students' grades?

The results of the EOCEP examination will be used as 20 percent of a student's final grade in the course. Individual EOCEP scores are reported based on the South Carolina uniform grading scale. The score reported is a scale score and not the percent correct.

As a teacher, what are my responsibilities with regard to the EOCEP?

On the first day of class, all students taking a course assessed by the EOCEP must receive a copy of the academic standards for that course. Teachers should incorporate the standards and the appropriate course content into their classroom curriculum, and they should thoroughly familiarize the students with the reference materials. Part 2 of this guide contains sample examination questions intended to help you and your students become familiar with the style of the questions on the test.

The primary responsibility of teachers with regard to the EOCEP is preparing their students for the test by ensuring that they acquire the concepts and skills addressed in the relevant course standards. Students are expected to have mastered the concepts and skills described in each U.S. History and the Constitution course standard and indicator as listed in the Social Studies Academic Standards.

What documents are available to help me prepare my students for the U.S. History and the Constitution examination?

For U.S. History and the Constitution course standards, see

<http://ed.sc.gov/agency/ac/Assessment/End-of-CourseExaminationProgramEOCEP.html>

The blueprint for the South Carolina EOCEP for U.S. History and the Constitution discusses the construction of the test and gives the approximate number of items in each of the standards and indicators. This document can be found at:

<http://ed.sc.gov/agency/ac/Assessment/documents/EOCEPblueprint2011.pdf>

The Social Studies Academic Standards document outlines the standards that are taught from kindergarten through grade twelve and indicates what students should know and be able to do prior to entering high school. This document can be found at:

<http://ed.sc.gov/agency/pr/Standards-and-Curriculum/old/cso/standards/ss/index.html>

Part 2

Sample EOCEP U.S. History and the Constitution Test Questions

This section contains sample test items that are representative of the questions used on the U.S. History and the Constitution end-of-course examination. These questions are only a sample of what students should expect to encounter on the actual examination. The items illustrate the format, type, and approximate level of difficulty of the examination questions. For each sample item, the standard(s), indicator(s), and strand(s) (History, Geography, Economics, Political Science) are identified; the content being tested is described as well as what students need to know to answer the question; and the correct and incorrect responses are explained. Where it is relevant, information is included regarding other concepts that may be measured by the indicator.

There are multiple forms of the examination that contain different items assessing the same standards.

SAMPLE QUESTION 1

Standard: USHC-1 The student will demonstrate an understanding of the conflicts between regional and national interest in the development of **democracy** in the United States.

Primary Indicator: USHC-1.1 Summarize the distinct characteristics of each colonial region in the settlement and development of British North America, including religious, social, political, and economic differences.

Primary Indicator Strand: History

Cognitive Category: Understand

Key: B

Emily was born in the colonies. Her parents emigrated from England in the early 1700s. Her parents came because they were searching for freedom of religion and because her father wanted to work in a large city and make money by exporting agricultural goods.

In which colony did Emily's family live?

- A. Massachusetts
- B. Pennsylvania
- C. Connecticut
- D. Georgia

This item focuses on the religious and economic “pull” factors that influenced emigration to the American colonies in the early eighteenth century. The item provides a short vignette, which students must connect to their knowledge of the different colonial regions at the time. To answer the question, students must understand the circumstances affecting Emily and her family and determine which colony they most likely settled in as a result. This requires knowledge of the economic and religious characteristics of the New England, middle, and southern colonies and to which region each colony belonged.

The key is B. Pennsylvania welcomed religious diversity and included the large port city of Philadelphia from which large amounts of goods were exported through the shipping industry.

Options A, C, and D offer plausible yet incorrect responses. Massachusetts was not known for being open to those of diverse religious beliefs. In addition, Connecticut did not have a large city for exporting goods. Georgia did not enjoy much religious diversity and acceptance and also lacked a large port city for shipping goods.

SAMPLE QUESTION 2

Standard: USHC-1 The student will demonstrate an understanding of the conflicts between regional and national interest in the development of **democracy** in the United States.

Primary Indicator: USHC-1.5 Explain how the fundamental principle of **limited government** is protected by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, including **democracy, republicanism, federalism, the separation of powers, the system of checks and balances, and individual rights.**

Primary Indicator Strand: Political Science

Cognitive Category: Analyze

Key: C

George Mason wrote in 1787 that “The purse and the sword must not be in the same hands.”

Which principle in the U.S. Constitution **best** reflects the concern expressed in this quotation?

- A. due process of law
- B. popular sovereignty
- C. separation of powers
- D. independent judiciary

This question focuses on separation of powers, one of the fundamental principles of the U.S. Constitution. The question requires students to read and understand the quote provided and relate the quote to the concept of separation of powers. In order to answer this question, students should be familiar with the ideas behind separation of powers and its significance in the creation of the new government under the Constitution. Students should be able to relate their knowledge of the colonists’ reasons for wanting to separate from Britain and the failure of the Articles of Confederation to the inclusion of the three-branch government under the new Constitution. Students need not be familiar with this quote from George Mason to answer the question. By accessing this knowledge of separation of powers and then associating “the purse” with finances and “the sword” with military, students should be able to relate the quote to the concept.

The key is C. In the Constitution, control of taxation (the purse) rests with the legislature, and powers as commander in chief (the sword) rest with the executive.

Options A, B, and D offer plausible yet incorrect responses. The quotation does not relate to the right of every citizen to be protected against arbitrary action by government or to the principle that sovereignty in the United States rests with the people. In addition, Mason was not talking about the role of the judiciary, which has the power neither of the purse nor of the sword.

SAMPLE QUESTION 3

Standard: USHC-2 The student will demonstrate an understanding of how economic developments and the westward movement impacted regional differences and **democracy** in the early nineteenth century.

Primary Indicator: USHC-2.2 Explain how the Monroe Doctrine and the concept of Manifest Destiny affected the United States' relationships with foreign powers, including the role of the United States in the Texan Revolution and the Mexican War.

Primary Indicator Strand: History

Cognitive Category: Understand

Key: C

How did the concept of manifest destiny affect the relationship between the United States and Mexico?

- A. It inspired the defense of the Alamo.
- B. It discouraged settlement in California.
- C. It helped the United States justify the annexation of Texas.
- D. It prevented the United States from taking control of the Gulf of Mexico.

This item focuses on the role of manifest destiny in the Mexican War and the acquisition of Texas during the mid-nineteenth century. The item requires students to understand the concept of manifest destiny and apply that concept to their knowledge of the relationship between the United States and Mexico during this time.

The key is C. Manifest destiny provided the ideological justification for the seizure of Texas from Mexico after the creation of the Republic of Texas.

Options A, B, and D provide plausible yet incorrect responses. The Texans defended the Alamo because their lives depended on it and because they were fighting to secede from Mexico. Manifest destiny was not a significant factor in their defense of the Alamo. Manifest destiny did not discourage the settlement of California; on the contrary, it inspired and justified American settlement in California, which was a Mexican territory in 1848. Finally, taking control of the Gulf of Mexico was not a goal of the United States that manifest destiny prevented.

SAMPLE QUESTION 4

Standard: USHC-3 The student will demonstrate an understanding of how regional and ideological differences led to the Civil War and an understanding of the impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on **democracy** in America.

Primary Indicator: USHC-3.1 Evaluate the relative importance of political events and issues that divided the nation and led to civil war, including the compromises reached to maintain the balance of free and slave states, the abolitionist movement, the Dred Scott case, conflicting views on states' rights and federal authority, the emergence of the Republican Party, and the formation of the Confederate States of America.

Primary Indicator Strand: History

Cognitive Category: Understand

Key: B

What did the Mexican Cession, "Bleeding Kansas," and John Brown's Raid have in common?

- A. All were examples of Manifest Destiny.
- B. All provoked increased debate over slavery.
- C. All were sparked by conflict with Native Americans.
- D. All helped Democrats win the ensuing presidential election.

This item focuses on three events that contributed to the conflict that led to the American Civil War. To answer this question, students must be familiar with each event and be able to determine what the events had in common. In this case, all three events demonstrated the increasing tension over the issue of slavery in the United States.

The key is B. Gaining new territory following the Mexican War led to more debates over whether the land should allow slavery. "Bleeding Kansas" describes the fighting that broke out as a result of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. The act called for the citizens of each area to vote to determine whether Kansas and Nebraska would be free or slave states. In Kansas, intense fighting broke out between pro- and anti-slavery factions as a result. Finally, in 1859, abolitionist John Brown incited a raid on an armory at Harper's Ferry as a means to the abolition of slavery.

Options A, C, and D offer plausible yet incorrect responses. John Brown's Raid and "Bleeding Kansas" were not examples of Manifest Destiny. Also, these events were not sparked by Native American conflicts. Finally, the events did not lead to a Democratic win in the next presidential election. In contrast, the election of 1860 marked a Republican victory.

SAMPLE QUESTION 5

Standard: USHC-4 The student will demonstrate an understanding of the industrial development and the consequences of that development on society and politics during the second half of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries.

Primary Indicator: USHC-4.3 Evaluate the role of **capitalism** and its impact on **democracy**, including the ascent of new industries, the increasing availability of consumer goods and the rising standard of living, the role of **entrepreneurs**, the rise of business through monopoly and the influence of business ideologies.

Primary Indicator Strand: History

Cognitive Category: Understand

Key: C

Which philosophy of the early 1900s is expressed in the following quotation?

Nature's cure for most social and political diseases is better than man's.

–Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University

- A. socialism
- B. communism
- C. Social Darwinism
- D. Gospel of Wealth

This item focuses on the ideology of Social Darwinism during the early 1900s. The item requires students to understand the quote provided and connect it to the theory of Social Darwinism. This theory asserts that the strongest or fittest will survive and flourish in society, while the weak and unfit will not. Students need not be familiar with this quote in order to answer the question, but they should be familiar with the terms socialism, communism, and Gospel of Wealth in order to rule them out as possible answers.

The key is C. The quote reflects Social Darwinism, Darwin's idea of survival of the fittest as applied to societies. The word "nature" in the quote provides an additional clue for students to connect to any knowledge they may have of Darwin and his theory.

Options A, B, and D offer plausible yet incorrect responses. Both socialism and communism, to different degrees, call for more government control over people and business, the opposite of the theory of Social Darwinism. The Gospel of Wealth claimed that the wealthy should give back to the community, which again contrasts with the theory of Social Darwinism.

SAMPLE QUESTION 6

Standard: USHC-5 The student will demonstrate an understanding of domestic and foreign developments that contributed to the emergence of the United States as a world power in the twentieth century.

Primary Indicator: USHC-5.4 Analyze the causes and consequences of United States involvement in World War I, including the failure of neutrality and the reasons for the declaration of war, the role of propaganda in creating a unified war effort, the limitation of individual liberties, and Woodrow Wilson's leadership in the Treaty of Versailles and the creation of the League of Nations.

Primary Indicator Strand: History

Cognitive Category: Analyze

Key: B

Look at the political cartoon below and answer the question that follows.



Which war is the cartoon **most** likely referring to?

- A. Spanish American War
- B. World War I
- C. World War II
- D. Vietnam War

This item focuses on the causes of United States' involvement in World War I. The item includes a political cartoon, which students must interpret and connect to their historical knowledge of what led the United States to become involved in the conflict. To answer this questions, students ideally would recognize Woodrow Wilson as the central figure and identify "American ships sunk without warning" and "April 2" on the documents and immediately connect them to events leading up to World War I.

The key is B. The final event that convinced President Wilson to seek a declaration of war against Germany, bringing the United States into World War I, was Germany's resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare, which led to the sinking without warning of a number of U.S. merchant ships in early 1917.

Options A, C, and D offer incorrect responses. The Spanish American War was not fought because of the sinking of multiple American ships but rather (at least in part) because of an explosion that occurred on one specific ship, the Maine. The U.S. declaration of war against Japan in World War II occurred in December 1941, not in April. Also, it is unlikely that the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor would be described in the general way referred to in the cartoon. The United States never declared war against North Vietnam. Also, the incident in the Gulf of Tonkin that President Johnson reported as a justification for using force against North Vietnam did not involve the sinking of American ships or the loss of American lives.

SAMPLE QUESTION 7

Standard: USHC-6 The student will demonstrate an understanding of the conflict between traditionalism and progressivism in the 1920s and the economic collapse and the political response to the economic crisis in the 1930s.

Primary Indicator: USHC-6.3 Explain the causes and consequences of the Great Depression, including the disparities in income and wealth distribution; the collapse of the farm economy and the effects of the Dust Bowl; limited governmental regulation; taxes, investment; and stock market speculation; policies of the federal government and the Federal Reserve System; and the effects of the Depression on the people.

Primary Indicator Strand: Economics

Cognitive Category: Understand

Key: C

Which weakness in the American economy of the 1920s contributed to the Great Depression?

- A. High taxation kept consumer spending at a low level.
- B. The richest Americans speculated in the stock market.
- C. Easy access to credit allowed many Americans to spend more than they earned.
- D. Businesses were unable to find enough skilled workers to operate new production machinery.

This item focuses on the causes of the Great Depression. The item requires students to understand the economic factors that weakened the American economy during the 1920s and led the way to the crash of 1929.

The key is C. The nation's wealth was concentrated in the hands of very few people, and the middle class had limited purchasing power and turned to the practice of installment buying rather than saving.

Options A, B, and D offer plausible yet incorrect responses. The 1920s was a period of low taxation and little regulation of the business practice of offering easy credit to consumers to encourage them to purchase products. Borrowing money to speculate in the stock market was the practice of the less wealthy investors who had limited amounts of available cash. Automated factories actually required fewer skills from the workers who ran the machines.

SAMPLE QUESTION 8

Standard: USHC-7 The student will demonstrate an understanding of the impact of World War II on the United States and the nation’s subsequent role in the world.

Primary Indicator: USHC-7.5 Analyze the impact of the **Cold War** on national security and individual freedom, including the **containment** policy and the role of military alliances, the effects of the “Red Scare” and McCarthyism, the conflicts in Korea and the Middle East, the Iron Curtain and the Berlin Wall, the Cuban missile crisis, and the nuclear arms race.

Primary Indicator Strand: Political Science

Cognitive Category: Understand

Key: B

Read the headlines below and answer the question that follows.

- U.S. Enters Korean War without Congressional Declaration
- Gulf of Tonkin Resolution Approved

Which political trend in the United States in the post-World War II period is reflected in these headlines?

- A. the increase in judicial activism
- B. the growing power of the presidency
- C. the upsurge in the domestic anti-war movement
- D. the rising threat of internal communist uprisings

This item focuses on the causes and effects of the Cold War as well as the administrations of Presidents Johnson, and Nixon. To answer this question, students must be familiar with the Korean War and the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, as well as understand the role of the president in each of these incidents. Each event showed a progressive increase in the role of the president and the power of the executive branch of government. Students must be able to connect each event to this idea.

The key is B. The progression of executive assertion of power is evidenced in these three events.

Options A, C, and D offer plausible yet incorrect responses. None of these events relate to activity by the judicial branch or a rise in judicial activism. The anti-war movement was directed against the Vietnam conflict, not Korea. Although some elected officials did see communist uprisings as a threat, this did not play a major role in these particular events.

SAMPLE QUESTION 9

Standard: USHC-7 The student will demonstrate an understanding of the impact of World War II on the United States and the nation's subsequent role in the world.

Primary Indicator: USHC-7.6 Analyze the causes and consequences of social and cultural changes in postwar America, including educational programs, the consumer **culture** and expanding suburbanization, the advances in medical and agricultural technology that led to changes in the standard of living and **demographic patterns**, and the roles of women in American society.

Primary Indicator Strand: History

Cognitive Category: Understand

Key: D

How did the American workplace change as a result of scientific and technological breakthroughs after World War II?

- A. Wages for most workers increased, but wages for managers decreased.
- B. Opportunities for minorities to move into managerial positions expanded.
- C. The number of factory jobs expanded due to the development of the assembly line.
- D. The number of white-collar jobs increased, but the number of blue-collar jobs decreased.

This item focuses on the lasting impact of the scientific and technological developments in the United States following World War II. To answer this question, students must be familiar with the ways these new developments affected the American economy, namely the job market.

The key is D. There was an increase of jobs in the white-collar sector and a decrease of blue-collar jobs. Many of the new jobs created from the growth of technology required workers to possess higher education degrees.

Options A, B, and C offer plausible yet incorrect responses. Wages for workers did not significantly increase nor did managers' wages decrease in general. If anything, the scientific developments during this time increased the economic disparity. Increased minority opportunity resulted from civil rights legislation in the 1960s, rather than from scientific and technological developments after World War II. The assembly line had been introduced many years before. The number of factory jobs decreased due to automation.

SAMPLE QUESTION 10

Standard: USHC-8 The student will demonstrate an understanding of social, economic and political issues in contemporary America.

Primary Indicator: USHC-8.6 Summarize America's role in the changing world, including the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the expansion of the European Union, the continuing crisis in the Middle East, and the rise of global terrorism.

Primary Indicator Strand: History

Cognitive Category: Understand

Key: D

What was a military outcome of Operation Desert Storm in 1991?

- A. The elimination of Kuwait's oil resources in Iraq
- B. The capture of Baghdad by United Nations forces
- C. The occupation of Iraq and Kuwait by allied ground troops
- D. The forced removal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait by coalition forces

This item focuses on the impact of the United States' involvement in the Persian Gulf and Operation Desert Storm in the early 1990s. To answer this question, students must understand the course and outcome of Operation Desert Storm.

The key is D. Coalition troops forcibly removed Iraqi forces from Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm.

Options A, B, and C offer plausible yet incorrect responses. Kuwait's extensive oil reserves were not seriously damaged by Iraq. Military forces did not capture Baghdad before the war ended. The occupation of Iraq by allied ground troops was a result of the 2003 Iraq war.

Part 3

Preparing Your Students for the Examination

Here are some strategies you can employ to help prepare your students for the U.S. History and the Constitution end-of-course examination.

- A. Ensure that your instructional practices are aligned with the examination by
 - using the U.S. History and the Constitution course standards and indicators in planning your lessons;
 - incorporating analysis of primary and secondary sources such as original texts, photographs, political cartoons, and quotes in your instruction;
 - using inquiry-based instruction;
 - incorporating ongoing cumulative review on a regular basis; and
 - asking such questions as “Why?” “How do you know?” and “Can you explain?”
- B. Ensure that your students are sufficiently familiar with the format of the examination by
 - incorporating into your instruction various questions and exercises that are similar in format and content to the samples in this guide; and
 - adjusting instruction in response to classroom assessment needs.
- C. Rather than practicing for the test, incorporate classroom assessments that probe students’ understanding by
 - focusing on standards-based instruction that incorporates inquiry, analysis, and higher level critical thinking strategies;
 - using meaningful classroom assessments that reflect the standards you teach in your classroom; and
 - incorporating the USHC release items into your own assessments and practicing distractor analysis as you go over the test with your class.
- D. Ensure that your students are sufficiently motivated to take the examination by
 - sharing information about the purpose and importance of the examination; and
 - sending notes home to enlist parental support for student participation.
- E. Ensure that your course outline is aligned with the examination by
 - placing appropriate emphasis on the concepts and skills outlined in the standards and course guides; and
 - supplementing the standard textbook with other instructional materials, particularly if specific standards are not adequately covered in the textbook.

Part 4

Raising Student Achievement Levels

You can use these teaching strategies to help raise your students' achievement level on the U.S. History and the Constitution examination.

- A. Correlate your course outline and unit and lesson plans with the standards.** Become thoroughly familiar with the standards and their relationship to the course outline for U.S. History and the Constitution. If certain standards are not included in your course outline but are assessed on the examination, you should incorporate those standards into your outline. Support documents and curriculum resources can be found on the following SCDE Web site:
http://ed.sc.gov/agency/pr/Standards-and-Curriculum/old/cso/social_studies/social.html
- B. Collaborate with other teachers in your school.** It is important that you and your social studies colleagues systematically review any inconsistencies between what you are teaching and the standards that are being assessed. Such discussions are critical for aligning curriculum and assessment and will help you make adjustments in what you emphasize and de-emphasize, what terms you use, and how and when you present specific aspects of the curriculum. Discussions with English language arts teachers will help you ensure that you review and reinforce the skills involved in reading and analyzing quotes and documents (both primary and secondary). These skills are critical for students who are preparing for the U.S. History and the Constitution assessment.
- C. Incorporate multiple-choice, constructed-response, and document-based questions into your unit tests and quizzes.** Since students are already tested and quizzed on an ongoing basis, one of the more straightforward strategies for raising achievement is to include questions that are similar to those that students will face in the end-of-course examination. Generally, well-written multiple-choice items contain, as the alternative options, the most common mistakes that students make. Instead of simply giving your students the correct answers, take time after any test or quiz to explain why they may have selected the incorrect options. Although constructed-response and document-based questions are not on the assessment, they are useful tools for good conceptual development.
- D. Develop action plans for your department.** Every school is different, and every department is different. Strategies that are needed in one place may not be needed in another. Some schools may have already implemented and institutionalized some strategies, and therefore need to focus on others. For these reasons, departments are encouraged to develop their own action plans that reflect existing conditions and needs. Written action plans with objectives, activities, timelines, and assigned responsibilities are effective ways to move forward. Study the results of reports to improve instruction and achievement.