

Grade 4 Social Studies Achievement Level Descriptors

The Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) describe the knowledge, skills, and cognitive processes that students should exhibit with relative consistency and accuracy in a variety of contexts. Some deviations or exceptions may be observed.

	Approaching Basic	Basic	Mastery	Advanced
General Social Studies Descriptors	Students at the Approaching Basic level demonstrate a limited understanding of history, civics, geography, and economics content and concepts of the United States.	Students at the Basic level demonstrate a general understanding of history, civics, geography, and economics content and concepts of the United States.	Students at the Mastery level demonstrate a strong understanding of history, civics, geography, and economics content and concepts of the United States.	Students at the Advanced level demonstrate a thorough understanding of history, civics, geography, and economics content and concepts of the United States.
Category	Approaching Basic	Basic	Mastery	Advanced
Claims and Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and express flawed claims that provide vague explanations of connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and/or place. • Use little or no evidence from the sources and limited knowledge from the course to respond to questions about social studies content and concepts. • Rely on either knowledge from the course or information provided in the sources to make vague or incomplete connections among social studies themes and disciplines (history, geography, civics, economics). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and express reasonable claims, but provide inconsistent or incomplete explanations of connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and/or place. • Use disconnected evidence from the sources and general knowledge from the course to respond to questions about social studies content and concepts. • Use knowledge from the course and information provided in the sources to make obvious connections among social studies themes and disciplines (history, geography, civics, economics). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and clearly express logical claims that provide consistent and complete explanations of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and/or place. • Use appropriate evidence from the sources and strong knowledge from the course to respond to questions about social studies content and concepts. • Integrate knowledge from the course with information provided in the sources to make reasoned and informed connections that show the relationships among social studies themes and disciplines (history, geography, civics, economics). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and effectively express valid claims that provide cohesive and in-depth explanations of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and/or place. • Use well-chosen evidence from the sources and thorough knowledge from the course to respond to questions about social studies content and concepts. • Synthesize knowledge from the course and information provided in the sources to make sophisticated connections that show the interrelationships among social studies themes and disciplines (history, geography, civics, economics).

Sample Content Connections	Category	Approaching Basic	Basic	Mastery	Advanced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Climate and geography shape the economies of the five regions of the United States. ● Geography influenced the migration and settlement of people in North America. ● British colonial policies motivated the founders to fight for a representative government. ● The Louisiana Purchase led to the geographic and economic expansion of the United States. ● Technological innovations helped expand the boundaries of the United States. ● The belief in Manifest Destiny supported the expansion of the United States and the spread of democracy 	History		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use a timeline of historical events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Construct timelines of historical events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use timelines to explain how changes over time have caused movement of people or expansion of boundaries in the United States.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify US symbols. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe the historical significance of US symbols. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain the historical significance of US political symbols. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify early explorers significant to the expansion of the United States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe the early explorations significant to the expansion of the United States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain how early explorations affected the expansion of boundaries and development in the United States. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify groups that migrated within the United States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe the voluntary migration of people within the United States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain the voluntary migration of people in relation to the expansion of boundaries of the United States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain the voluntary migration of people and its significance in the development of the boundaries of the United States.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify key contributions of people in the history of the United States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe how key contributions of people influenced the history of the United States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cite evidence to support the key contributions and influence of people in the history of the United States. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify inventions that affected the lives of people in the United States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe how inventions affected the lives of people and the economy of the United States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe how inventions and new processes affected the lives of people and the economy of the United States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain how inventions and new processes affected the lives of people, migration, and the economy of regions of the United States.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Show an understanding of events that helped democracy expand in the United States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe events in that helped expand democracy in the United States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draw conclusions about the relationship between significant events in the history of the United States and the expansion of democracy in the United States. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Show an understanding of the meanings of “melting pot,” “salad bowl,” and “cultural mosaic.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use concepts of “melting pot,” “salad bowl,” and “cultural mosaic” to describe diversity in the United States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use concepts “melting pot,” “salad bowl,” and “cultural “melting pot,” “salad bowl,” and “cultural mosaic” to explain the impact of immigration on population growth and diversity in the United States. 	
	Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Locate and label continents, oceans, poles, and hemispheres on a map and/or globe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Locate and label continents, oceans, poles, hemispheres, and key parallels and meridians on a map and globe. 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Locate and label the major physical features of the United States on a map. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Locate and label the major physical features of each of the five regions of the United States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Locate and label the major physical features of each of the five regions of the United States and summarize how they affect the climate of each region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Locate and label the major physical features of each of the five regions of the United States and summarize how they affect the climate, economy, and population of each region.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the states of each of the five regions. 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure approximate distance on a map. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure approximate distance on a map using scale to the nearest hundredth mile. 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe lines of longitude and latitude. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the approximate longitude and latitude coordinates of various locations in the United States. 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinguish between the five regions of the United States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the general physical characteristics of the five regions of the United States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare and contrast the distinguishing physical characteristic of the five regions of the United States. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the physical characteristics of a region and its economy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect the physical characteristics of a region to its economy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how the physical characteristics of a region shape its economic development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how physical characteristics of a region shape its economic development.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify characteristics of a physical region necessary for human settlement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how physical characteristics of a region influence human settlement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and explain how the physical characteristics of a region influence human settlement. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify how natural processes have created and/or changed the physical characteristics of places in the United States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show an understanding of how natural processes have created and/or changed the physical characteristics of places in the United States. 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify ways humans affect land and bodies of water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe ways humans impact land and bodies of water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe human impact on the land and bodies of water in the five regions of the United States. 	
	Civics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify amendments that have been added to the US Constitution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify changes that have been made to the US Constitution through the amendment process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the significant changes that have been made to the US Constitution through the amendment process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and summarize the significant changes that have been made to the US Constitution through the amendment process.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the key ideas contained in the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the significance of key ideas contained in the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the significance of key ideas contained in the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the basic purposes of government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the basic purposes and necessity of government as identified in the Preamble to the US Constitution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the basic purposes and necessity of government as identified in the Preamble to the US Constitution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and analyze the basic purposes and necessity of government as identified in the Preamble to the US Constitution.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the three branches of the federal government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the structure and function of the three branches of the federal government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Differentiate between the structure and function of the three branches of the federal government. 	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the key requirements for becoming a US citizen. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the difference between rights, responsibilities, and duties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe a citizens' rights, responsibilities, and duties. 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the qualities of a good citizen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the qualities of a good citizen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how good citizenship contributes to democracy in the United States. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify current issues that citizens can solve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how a good citizen can help solve an issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how good citizenship can solve a current issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the qualities of a good citizen and how good citizenship contributes to democracy in the United States.
	Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify wants and needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how needs should be met before wants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a logical argument to support the choice of a particular want after all needs are met. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify examples of human, natural, and capital resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how human, natural, and capital resources are used to produce goods and services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify examples of human, natural, and capital resources and explain how these resources are used to produce goods and services. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define profit and risk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define profit and risk and identify how they relate to each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define the terms profit and risk and explain how they relate to each other. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify which goods and services the government provides. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how governments pay for goods and services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how government pays for goods and services through taxes and fees. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify roles of businesses and jobs in the economy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify roles of households, businesses, jobs, banks, and governments in the economy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the roles of households, businesses, jobs, banks, and governments in the economy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize the roles of households, businesses, jobs, banks, and governments in the economy.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define barter and trade. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify why individuals and businesses engage in barter and trade. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain why individuals and businesses engage in barter and trade. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify money, checks, debit cards, and credit cards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare money (currency), checks, debit cards, and credit cards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the difference between money (currency), checks, debit cards, and credit cards and identify advantages of each type of monetary exchange. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Differentiate between money (currency), checks, debit cards, and credit cards and identify advantages and disadvantages of each type of monetary exchange.