U.S. History 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. However, some deviations or exceptions may be observed.

	Approaching Basic	Basic	Mastery	Advanced
General US History Descriptors	Students at the Approaching Basic level demonstrate a **limited** understanding of content and concepts in U.S. history from westward expansion through the modern age.	Students at the Basic level demonstrate a **general** understanding of content and concepts in U.S. history from westward expansion through the modern age.	Students at the Mastery level demonstrate a **strong** understanding of content and concepts in U.S. history from westward expansion through the modern age.	Students at the Advanced level demonstrate a **thorough** understanding of content and concepts in U.S. history from westward expansion through the modern age.
Category	**Approaching Basic**	**Basic**	**Mastery**	**Advanced**
Claims and Connections	• Develop and express claims that may be **flawed** or provide **vague** explanations of connections and relationships among ideas, people, and events within or across time and place. • Use **little or no** evidence from the sources and **limited** knowledge from the course to respond to questions about U.S. history content and concepts. • Rely on either knowledge from the course **or** information provided in the sources to make connections among U.S. history themes that may be **vague or incomplete**.	• Develop and express **reasonable** claims, but provide explanations of connections and relationships among ideas, people, and events within or across time and place that may be **inconsistent or incomplete**. • Use evidence from the sources that may be **disconnected** and **general** knowledge from the course to respond to questions about U.S. history content and concepts. • **Use** knowledge from the course and information provided in the sources to make **obvious** connections among U.S. history themes.	• Develop and clearly express **logical** claims that provide **consistent and complete** explanations of the connections, and relationships among ideas, people, and events within or across time and place. • Use **appropriate** evidence from the sources and **strong** knowledge from the course to respond to questions about U.S. history 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 U.S. history themes.	• Develop and effectively express **valid** claims that provide **cohesive and in-depth** explanations of the connections, and relationships among ideas, people, and events within or across time and place. • Use **well-chosen** evidence from the sources and **thorough** knowledge from the course to respond to questions about U.S. history content and concepts. • **Synthesize** knowledge from the course with information provided in the sources to make **sophisticated** connections that show the interrelationships among U.S. history themes.

Sample Content Connections	Category	Approaching Basic	Basic	Mastery	Advanced
• People, ideas, and events shaped U.S. foreign and domestic policies. • Technological innovations affected social, political, and economic trends. • Foreign and domestic policies and events influenced continuity and change in the national identity of the United States and its people. • Social movements contributed to political, social, and economic changes in the United States. • Political, social, and economic factors shaped the role of the U.S. federal government in foreign and domestic affairs.	**Standard 2: Western Expansion to Progressivism**	• Describe reasons for westward expansion and the social antagonism that existed between ethnic and cultural groups as a result.	• Explain why social and political antagonism existed between ethnic and cultural groups as a result of westward expansion.	• Analyze the social, political, and economic antagonism that existed between ethnic and cultural groups as a result of westward expansion.	• Evaluate the social, political, and economic antagonism that existed between ethnic and cultural groups as a result of westward expansion.
		• Describe economic changes that occurred on the western frontier.	• Describe the causes of social and economic problems encountered by farmers on the western frontier.	• Explain the significance of economic changes that occurred on the western frontier, the political, social, and economic problems encountered by farmers, and the solutions developed by the Populist movement.	• Analyze economic changes that occurred on the western frontier and political, social, and economic problems encountered by farmers, and critique solutions developed by the Populist movement.
		• Describe the government's laissez-faire policy and innovations in technology and transportation that led to the growth of an industrial economy.	• Describe changes in business organization during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and explain the effects of the government's laissez-faire policies and innovations in technology and transportation that led to the growth of an industrial economy.	• Analyze the effect of the government's laissez-faire policies, innovations in technology and transportation, and changes in business organization that led to the growth of an industrial economy.	• Evaluate the government's laissez-faire policies, innovations in technology and transportation, and changes in business organization that led to the growth of an industrial economy.
		• Describe motivations behind mass immigration and challenges associated with immigration and rapid industrialization.	• Describe phases and geographic origins behind mass immigration, and the government's response to immigration, urbanization, and rapid industrialization.	• Explain how mass immigration accelerated urbanization and analyze the government's response to the challenges associated with immigration, urbanization, and rapid industrialization.	• Evaluate the government's response to the challenges associated with immigration, urbanization, and rapid industrialization.
		• Describe the social and economic struggles of a growing labor force that resulted in the formation of labor unions.	• Explain the significance of the political, social, and economic struggles of a growing labor force that resulted in the formation of labor unions and how they attempted to improve working conditions.	• Analyze the political, social, and economic struggles of a growing labor force that resulted in the formation of labor unions and their attempts to improve working conditions.	• Evaluate the attempts by labor unions and the growing labor force to improve working conditions.
		• Identify the goals of Progressivism and describe the role of muckrakers.	• Describe the goals of Progressivism and the influence of the muckrakers, political leaders, and intellectuals on the Progressive movement.	• Explain how muckrakers, political leaders, and intellectuals influenced the Progressive movement and analyze the movement's successes and failures.	• Analyze the influence of muckrakers, political leaders, and intellectuals on the Progressive movement, and evaluate the movement's successes and failures.

	Standard 3: Isolationism through the Great War	• Describe the causes of U.S. imperialistic policies.	• Describe the immediate consequences of U.S. imperialistic policies upon other regions and acquired territories.	• Analyze the causes of U.S. imperialistic policies, and describe both immediate and long-term consequences upon other regions and acquired territories.	• Evaluate the causes of U.S. imperialistic policies, and analyze both immediate and long-term consequences upon other regions and acquired territories.
		• Identify the root causes of World War I and describe the reasons for U.S. entry into the war.	• Describe the root causes of World War I, explain the reasons for U.S. entry into the war, and describe ways the U.S. government financed and directed public support for the war effort.	• Analyze the reasons for U.S. entry into World War I and explain how the U.S. government financed the war, managed the economy, and directed public support for the war effort.	• Evaluate the reasons for U.S. entry into World War I and analyze ways the U.S. government financed the war, managed the economy, and directed public support for the war effort.
		• Describe innovations in military technology and major events that affected the outcome of World War I.	• Explain how key military leaders, innovations in military technology, and major events affected the outcome of World War I.	• Analyze how key military leaders, innovations in military technology, and major events affected the outcome of World War I.	• Evaluate the influence of key military leaders, innovations in military technology, and major events on the outcome of World War I.
		• Identify the goals of political leaders at the Paris Peace Conference and describe the consequences of the Treaty of Versailles.	• Describe the goals of political leaders at the Paris Peace Conference and explain the significance of the consequences of the Treaty of Versailles.	• Analyze the goals of political leaders at the Paris Peace Conference and the consequences of the Treaty of Versailles.	• Evaluate the goals of political leaders at the Paris Peace Conference and the consequences of the Treaty of Versailles.
	Standard 4: Becoming a World Power through World War II	• Describe Prohibition and the women's movement of the Roaring Twenties.	• Describe population shifts and artistic movements of the Roaring Twenties.	• Explain how population shifts, artistic movements, Prohibition, and the women's movement of the Roaring Twenties were a reflection of and a reaction to changes in American society.	• Analyze population shifts, artistic movements, Prohibition, and the women's movement of the Roaring Twenties and how each was a reflection of and a reaction to changes in American society.
		• Describe the attacks on civil liberties and return to isolationism during the presidential administrations of the 1920s.	• Explain the role and importance of the economic policies, attacks on civil liberties, and return to isolationism during presidential administrations of the 1920s.	• Analyze the economic policies, attacks on civil liberties, and presidential administrations of the 1920s and explain how each reflected a return to isolationism.	• Evaluate the economic policies, attacks on civil liberties, and presidential administrations of the 1920s and how each reflected a return to isolationism.
		• Describe major technological innovations of the 1920s that affected American society.	• Describe the impact of major technological innovations and scientific theories of the 1920s on American society.	• Explain how major technological innovations and scientific theories of the 1920s affected American society.	• Analyze the impact of major technological innovations and scientific theories of the 1920s on American society.
		• Identify the causes and effects of the Great Depression and describe the purposes of the New Deal.	• Describe the causes and effects of the Great Depression, and explain how the Hoover and Roosevelt administrations responded to the crisis and the purposes of key New Deal programs.	• Analyze the causes and effects of the Great Depression and the responses of the Hoover and Roosevelt administrations, and describe the social, economic, and political impact of key New Deal programs on the United States.	• Evaluate the responses of the Hoover and Roosevelt administrations to the Great Depression and analyze the social, economic, and political impact of key New Deal programs on the United States.

		• Describe the causes of World War II and the reasons for U.S. entry into the war.	• Explain the causes of World War II and the reasons for U.S. entry into the war, and describe ways the U.S. government financed and encouraged public support for the war effort.	• Analyze the causes of World War II and the reasons for U.S. entry into the war, and explain how the U.S. government financed the war, managed the economy, and encouraged public support for the war effort.	• Evaluate the reasons for U.S. entry into the war and analyze ways the U.S. government financed the war, managed the economy, and encouraged public support for the war effort.
		• Describe the role of women on the home front during World War II.	• Describe the role of minority groups on the home front and in the military and the role of women in the military during World War II.	• Analyze the role of minority groups and women on the home front and in the military during World War II and explain how it changed their status in society.	• Analyze the change in social status of minority groups and women as a result of their role on the home front and in the military during World War II.
		• Describe the turning points and outcome of World War II.	• Explain the importance of major events, turning points, key strategic decisions of leaders, and the outcome of World War II.	• Analyze major events, turning points, and key strategic decisions of leaders during World War II, and explain how they affected the outcome of the war and the beginning of the Cold War.	• Evaluate major events, turning points, and key strategic decisions of leaders during World War II and the effects of each on the outcome of the war and the beginning of the Cold War.
	Standard 5 and Standard 6: Cold War Era and The Modern Age	• Describe U.S. domestic and foreign policy associated with the Cold War during the 1940s and 1950s.	• Explain how U.S. domestic and foreign policy influenced Cold War events during the 1940s and 1950s and describe ways these policies attempted to contain the spread of communism.	• Analyze the impact of U.S. domestic and foreign policy on Cold War events during the 1940s and 1950s and explain how these policies attempted to contain the spread of communism.	• Evaluate U.S. domestic and foreign policy of the Cold War during the 1940s and 1950s and the attempts of these policies to contain the spread of communism.
		• Describe Cold War events and policies of the 1960s and 1970s.	• Describe domestic and foreign events and policies of the 1960s and 1970s, and explain how escalating Cold War tensions influenced the events and policies.	• Analyze the relationships among domestic events and foreign policies of the 1960s and 1970s and escalating Cold War tensions.	• Evaluate the influence of escalating Cold War tensions on domestic and foreign events and policies of the 1960s and 1970s.
		• Describe key events, methods used by leaders, and legislation associated with post-war social movements and the Civil Rights movement.	• Describe the role and importance of post-war social movements and of the Civil Rights movement in the expansion of opportunities for African Americans in the United States.	• Explain how post-war social movements and the Civil Rights movement caused change by analyzing the methods used by the leaders, the effectiveness of legislation, and the impact of key events.	• Analyze the changes caused by post-war social movements and the Civil Rights movement and evaluate the methods used by the leaders, the effectiveness of legislation, and the impact of key events.
		• Identify leaders and events associated with the end of the Cold War.	• Describe leaders, events, and policies that combined to bring about an end to the Cold War.	• Explain how leaders' personalities, events, and policies combined to bring about an end to the Cold War.	• Analyze the relationship among leaders' personalities, events, and policies and their combined influence on bringing about an end to the Cold War.

			• Describe domestic policies of post-Cold War presidencies.	• Explain the significance of domestic policies of post-Cold War presidencies.	• Compare and contrast the domestic policies of post-Cold War presidencies.	• Analyze the influence of the domestic policies of post-Cold War presidencies.
			• Describe advances in the media during the modern era that have altered society.	• Describe advances in medicine and technology during the modern era that have altered society.	• Explain how advances in medicine, technology, and the media during the modern era have altered society.	• Analyze advances in medicine, technology, and the media during the modern era and how each has altered society.
			• Describe relationships between the United States and Middle Eastern countries.	• Explain the development of relationships between the United States and Middle Eastern countries over time and describe the image of the United States in the region.	• Trace the evolution of relationships between the United States and Middle Eastern countries and explain how these interactions have defined the image of the United States in the region.	• Analyze relationships between the United States and Middle Eastern countries and interactions that have defined the image of the United States in the region over time.
			• Describe events that changed the American people's perceptions of government during the 1960s and 1970s.	• Describe events that changed the American people's perceptions of government over time.	• Explain how events changed the American people's perceptions of government over time.	• Analyze events that changed the American people's perceptions of government over time.
			• Describe landmark Supreme Court decisions from the Warren Court to the present.	• Explain the importance of landmark Supreme Court decisions from the Warren Court to the present and describe related ideologies.	• Categorize the ideology of landmark Supreme Court decisions from the Warren Court to the present and explain the impact of the decisions on political and social institutions.	• Analyze landmark Supreme Court decisions from the Warren Court to the present and related ideologies, and evaluate the impact of the decisions on political and social institutions.
			• Describe acts of domestic and foreign terrorism.	• Describe the rise in domestic and foreign terrorism and explain its effects on America's way of life.	• Trace the rise in domestic and foreign terrorism and analyze its effects on America's way of life.	• Evaluate the rise in domestic and foreign terrorism and its effects on America's way of life.