

TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS (TAKS)
BLUEPRINT FOR GRADE 8 SOCIAL STUDIES

| Objectives | Number of Items |
|--|-----------------|
| Objective 1—History | 13 |
| Objective 2—Geography | 6 |
| Objective 3—Economic and Social Influences | 9 |
| Objective 4—Political Influences | 12 |
| Objective 5—Social Studies Skills | 8 |
| Total number of items | 48 |

Curriculum Rationale

Objectives 1 and 4 consist of portions of the 8th grade curriculum pertaining to issues and events in early American history as well as political influences on historical events from 1607 to 1877. Forty of the sixty-five student expectations eligible for assessment on TAKS are included under these two objectives. Moreover, the student expectations listed under Objectives 1 and 4 are based on broad concepts related to the development of representative government in the United States and therefore require a relatively large number of items to measure fully. Examples of such concepts include causes of the American Revolution, fundamental principles of the U.S. Constitution, and factors that led to the growth of sectionalism and the Civil War.

Objective 2 is the geography objective and consists of both content- and skills-based portions of the curriculum. There are two reasons that this objective can be measured with a smaller number of items: first, a relatively small number of student expectations are eligible for assessment; and second, Objective 2 includes geographically related skills that overlap to some extent with skills measured in Objective 5.

Objective 3 measures economic and social influences on historical events, including the development of the U.S. free enterprise system and the impact of such technological innovations as steamboats and railroads. The student expectations for this objective are more precise than those in Objectives 1 and 4 and therefore do not require as many test items to measure fully.

Objective 5 is the skills objective. Critical-thinking skills are included in the social studies curriculum beginning in kindergarten. Even though this objective contains the smallest number of student expectations, students must be proficient at these critical-thinking skills to understand the broad spectrum of social studies concepts and information necessary to become an informed citizen. As a result, the number of items included under this objective is comparatively large.