

# CLEP® Social Sciences and History: At a Glance

## Description of the Examination

The Social Sciences and History examination covers a wide range of topics from the social sciences and history disciplines. While the exam is based on no specific course, its content is drawn from introductory college courses that cover United States history, Western civilization, world history, government/political science, geography, sociology, economics, psychology and anthropology. The primary objective of the exam is to give candidates the opportunity to demonstrate that they possess the level of knowledge and understanding expected of college students who meet a distribution or general education requirement in the social sciences/history areas.

The Social Sciences and History examination contains approximately 120 questions to be answered in 90 minutes. Some of them are pretest questions that will not be scored.

## Knowledge and Skills Required

The Social Sciences and History examination requires candidates to demonstrate one or more of the following:

- Familiarity with terminology, facts, conventions, methodology, concepts, principles, generalizations and theories
- Ability to understand, interpret and analyze graphic, pictorial and written material
- Ability to apply abstractions to particulars and to apply hypotheses, concepts, theories and principles to given data

The content of the exam is drawn from the following disciplines. The percentages next to the main disciplines indicate the approximate percentage of exam questions on that topic.

### 40% History

Requires general knowledge and understanding of time- and place-specific human experiences. Topics covered include political, diplomatic, social, economic, intellectual and cultural material. Areas include:

- **United States History (17%)**  
Covers the colonial period, the American Revolution, the early republic, the Civil War and Reconstruction, industrialization, the Progressive Era, World War I, the 1920s, the Great Depression and the New Deal, World War II, the 1950s, the Cold War, social conflict — the 1960s and 1970s, the late 20th century
- **Western Civilization (15%)**  
Covers ancient Western Asia, Egypt, Greece and Rome as well as medieval Europe and modern Europe, including its expansion and outposts in other parts of the world

- **World History (8%)**

Covers Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America and South America from prehistory to the present, including global themes and interactions

- **13% Government/Political Science, including**

Comparative politics, international relations, methods, United States institutions, voting and political behavior

- **11% Geography, including**

Cartographic methods, cultural geography, physical geography, population, regional geography, spatial interaction

- **10% Economics, including**

Economic measurements, international trade, major theorists and schools, monetary and fiscal policy, product markets, resource markets, and scarcity, choice and cost

- **10% Psychology, including**

Aggression, biopsychology, conformity, group process, major theorists and schools, methods, performance, personality, socialization

- **10% Sociology, including**

Demography, deviance, family, interaction, major theorists and schools, methods, social change, social organization, social stratification, social theory

- **6% Anthropology, including**

Cultural anthropology, ethnography, major theorists and schools, methods, paleoanthropology

## Study Resources

Most of the textbooks used in college-level social sciences and history courses cover the topics in the above outline, but the approaches to certain topics and the emphases given to them may differ. To prepare for the Social Sciences and History exam, it is advisable to study one or more college textbooks on United States and world history, sociology, Western civilization and other related courses, which can be found in most college bookstores.

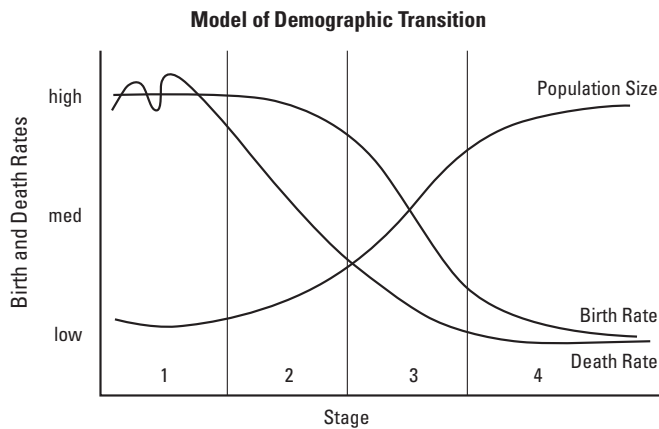
The materials suggested for preparing for other CLEP® exams may also be helpful. Study resources for the American Government, History of the United States I and II, Principles of Macroeconomics and Principles of Microeconomics, Introductory Psychology, Introductory Sociology, and Western Civilization I and II exams are particularly relevant and can be found in the Study Resources section of the *CLEP Official Study Guide* for these exams. HINT: When selecting a textbook, check the table of contents against the Knowledge and Skills Required for the relevant section of this test.

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Visit [www.collegeboard.com/clepprep](http://www.collegeboard.com/clepprep) for additional social sciences and history resources. You can also find suggestions for exam preparation in Chapter IV of the *CLEP Official Study Guide*. In addition, many college faculty post their course materials on their schools' websites.

## Sample Test Questions

The following sample questions do not appear on an actual CLEP examination. They are intended to give potential test-takers an indication of the format and difficulty level of the examination and to provide content for practice and review. For more sample questions and info about the test, see the *CLEP Official Study Guide*.



1. Which of the following countries is in Stage 4 of the demographic transition model shown above?

- (A) Japan
- (B) Kenya
- (C) Nicaragua
- (D) Yemen
- (E) Indonesia

2. Anti-Jewish pogroms in Russia in the late 19th century had which of the following effects?

- (A) They accelerated intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews in Russian cities.
- (B) Jewish emigration to Britain and the United States increased dramatically.
- (C) The League of Nations issued an official condemnation of anti-Jewish policies.
- (D) The Russian army rose up against the Tsar and attempted a coup in protest.
- (E) They led Poland and Germany to resettle large numbers of refugees from Russia.

3. In a market characterized by pure monopoly control, which of the following is a limit on the power of monopoly?

- (A) the elasticity of the demand curve
- (B) large amounts of capital required for investment in production
- (C) the inability to determine either price or output
- (D) the presence of overseas competitors
- (E) the existence of other monopolies in other industries.

4. Researchers notice that the incidence of birth defects in a particular region has increased in the previous decade. Upon investigation, they find that a new chemical plant has begun operating nearby in the past few years. In evaluating the possibility of a link between the plant and the increase in birth defects, which of the following pieces of information would be LEAST helpful?

- (A) Whether the date the plant opened was before or after the incidence of birth defects increased
- (B) The family histories of the children in whom birth defects were noted
- (C) Any changes in incidence of birth defects in nearby regions
- (D) Whether similar increases in birth defects occurred near similar chemical plants in other regions
- (E) The severity of the birth defects and their impact on the quality of life of those affected by them

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5. The main difference between a president and a prime minister is that

- (A) Prime ministers only exist in countries that are functional monarchies
- (B) Presidents are elected through popular vote while prime ministers are chosen either by a parliament or a head of state
- (C) Prime ministers are always ceremonial figureheads while presidents run the government
- (D) Presidents are limited to a set number of terms but prime ministers are usually appointed for life
- (E) The posts of president and prime minister are indistinguishable from one another; the only difference is the wording

6. According to labeling theory, civil disobedience in protest against a law can be defined as deviant behavior because

- (A) those who created the law perceive protesters' violation of the law as deviant
- (B) most people affected negatively by such a law tend to be marginalized members of society
- (C) people who do not properly internalize the laws and regulations of society are by nature deviant
- (D) civil disobedience can be taken as evidence of strained social bonds that negatively affect society
- (E) The anomie experienced by such protesters leads them to react strongly against most social strictures

7. When Abraham Lincoln commented upon meeting a visitor that she was "the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war," the author and book he was referring to were

- (A) Pearl S. Buck and *The Good Earth*
- (B) Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley and *Frankenstein*
- (C) Margaret Mitchell and *Gone with the Wind*
- (D) Harriet Beecher Stowe and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
- (E) Harriet Jacobs and *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

8. Which of the following is an example of a countercyclical monetary policy?

- (A) instituting a progressive income tax
- (B) raising income taxes while simultaneously lowering property taxes
- (C) government nationalization of a major industry
- (D) reducing interest rates to stimulate economic activity
- (E) increasing tariffs on imported grain in order to promote domestic agriculture

9. When a large city appropriates abandoned train tracks downtown and installs a trolley line for local commuting and sightseeing, the line's popularity inspires other large cities in the region to do the same thing. This is an example of

- (A) Contagious diffusion
- (B) Chain migration
- (C) Hierarchical diffusion
- (D) Core/periphery
- (E) Agglomeration

## Credit Recommendations

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The American Council on Education has recommended that colleges grant 6 credits for a score of 50, which is equivalent to a course grade of C, on the CLEP Social Sciences and History exam. Each college, however, is responsible for setting its own policy. For candidates with satisfactory scores on the Social Sciences and History examination, colleges may grant credit toward fulfillment of a distribution requirement, or for a particular course that matches the exam in content. Check with your school to find out the score it requires for granting credit, the number of credit hours granted and the course that can be bypassed with a passing score.

Answers to Sample Questions: 1-A; 2-B; 3-A; 4-E; 5-B; 6-A; 7-D; 8-D; 9-C.