

**State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)  
Performance Level Descriptors  
Grade 8 Social Studies**

**Performance Level Descriptors**

Students' social studies skills are not assessed in isolation but are incorporated into questions that assess understanding of U.S. history content. Social studies skills focus on applying critical-thinking skills to interpret, organize, and analyze social studies information from a variety of sources.

**Students achieving**

**can**

Evaluate historical perspectives on major events and issues in U.S. history  
Apply content knowledge in multiple contexts to make historical connections and evaluate change over time  
Evaluate historical justifications and interpretations through the examination of multiple and varied sources  
Analyze the foundation of representative government and how economic, political, and social changes impact representative government

**Students achieving**

**can**

Describe the impact of colonialism and revolution on the development of the United States  
Explain the development of representative government in the United States  
Explain constitutional principles and issues  
Analyze the causes of the Civil War