

W.Va. Code §18-2-9

Golden Horseshoe, American History, and Civics Testing Requirements



West Virginia DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is required to take these exams?

W.Va. Code §18-2-9 requires the administration of a cumulative American history and civics test prior to high school graduation. In addition, all Grade 8 students must now take the Golden Horseshoe online exam.

It is mandatory of students to take the American history exam at the end of their last U.S. history course (AP U.S. History, U.S. Comprehensive, or Contemporary Studies) and the civics exam which also meets the citizenship test requirement must be taken at the end of Civics or AP Government and Politics prior to graduation. Each county must establish record keeping protocols to ensure documentation of each graduate's examination of the two required high school tests. The Golden Horseshoe online test will be administered to Grade 8 students using the schedule found on the [student programs website](#).

When do students take the exams?

Students in grade 8 will take the Golden Horseshoe exam using the schedule provided for each county. The county contact for Golden Horseshoe has this information.

Students in grades 9-12 may access the American history and Civics exams at end of each semester.

- » Fall/Winter 2025-2026 - November 17, 2025-January 30, 2026
- » Spring 2026 Semester - April 13, 2026-June 12, 2026

How do students access the test?

Students will use their Office 365 credentials to log into [webtop](#). There are three icons associated with the exams:



Who may administer/proctor the exams?

Any teacher may administer the Golden Horseshoe exam except for the 8th Grade WV Studies teacher.

The classroom teacher may administer the American history and Civics exams.

All exam administrators must sign the appropriate confidentiality agreement before proctoring the exams. Confidentiality agreements are located on the [student programs website](#) under Social Studies Assessments and Golden Horseshoe.

Are seniors required to take the American history test?

All students must have record of the US History and Civics exams to graduate.

| Are virtual school students required to take the tests?

Yes. All virtual school students are required to take the exams. These students must be scheduled to take the exams in the school with a test administrator who has signed the appropriate confidentiality agreement.

| Are there practice materials for the two tests?

Two different practice tests are provided for the Golden Horseshoe to familiarize students to the webtop portal. The first practice test will open the second week of January and the second one will open the fourth week of January. All practice tests will close by the end of the first week of February.

There are no practice tests for the American history and Civics exams. W.Va. Code §18-2-9 outlines content required to be covered on the exams.

| Do all 8th grade students need to take the Golden Horseshoe?

Yes. All 8th grade students are now required to take the multiple-choice portion of the Golden Horseshoe.

| Is there a score requirement for students to pass the exams?

W.Va. Code §18-2-9 does not require a certain score to pass the exams. Counties and schools have the latitude to decide how to use the score from the exams.

| How do teachers access scores?

County superintendents, county directors, and lead principals have access to the Social Studies Monitoring tool - <https://wveis.k12.wv.us/ss-monitoring>. Within the portal, an excel file may be generated to share with teachers. SSO credentials are required to access the portal.

| Are there makeup exam dates for the exams?

The West Department of Education will provide a make up window for the Golden Horseshoe exam. However, only students who take the Golden Horseshoe on the designated day for each county will be eligible for the competition.

The American History and Civics exams may be taken any day during the open window in the fall/ winter and spring semesters.

| How many questions are on the exam?

The Golden Horseshoe has 50 multiple choice questions. Both American history and civics exams have 25 multiple choice questions.

These exams should not take any longer than one full class period to administer.

| How are IEP accommodations met?

The social studies exams are not part of school accountability and results are only available to each individual county. Only classroom accommodations such as read aloud and extended time may be provided to students with these accommodations listed on the IEP. The system does not read the test aloud. Therefore, a teacher who has signed the confidentiality agreement will need to read the test aloud to students requiring this accommodation.

The tests are not timed.
