

Understanding the Structure and Content of the Test

The content knowledge assessed by each NES test is described in the test's *NES Profile*, which contains the following free test preparation information specific to the test field:

- an interactive test summary
- the complete set of test competencies
- sample test questions

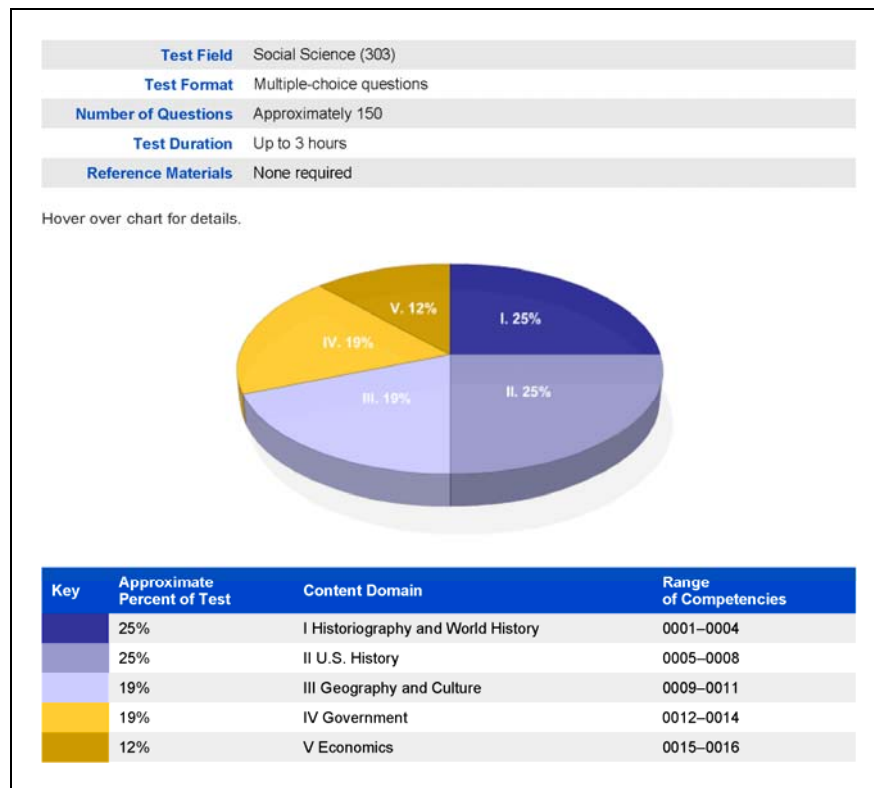
The information here describes how to use the test summary and set of test competencies within a *NES Profile* to understand both the design and content of a NES test.

The Test Summary

The test summary outlines the following components for each test:

- the **content domains covered**
- the **types of questions** (multiple-choice questions and/or constructed-response assignments)
- the **approximate number of test questions and length of the test**
- the **reference materials provided to you** during the test, if applicable (e.g., calculator, formulas pages)
- the **percentage of your total test score derived from each content domain**

The following is an example of the test summary page from the *NES Profile* for the Social Science test.



The Test Competencies

The set of test competencies defines the content covered on the test. The competencies are aligned with national standards for teacher preparation and student learning standards. The competencies are organized for structural and reporting purposes into major groupings of content-area knowledge called *content domains*. Each competency is further defined by a number of descriptive statements. These components can be further described as follows:

- **Content domains** are groupings of competencies that reflect the major domains of subject-area knowledge for the test. When receiving test scores, candidates are given feedback on their performance on the content domains of the test.
- The **competencies** define the content on which candidates will be tested. They are broad descriptions of the knowledge and abilities that are important to the job of an educator.
- The **descriptive statements** provide further details about the nature and range of content covered by the competencies. They are intended to suggest the types of content that are included in the test questions measuring the competency.

Test questions—both multiple-choice questions and constructed-response assignments—are designed to measure specific content defined by the test competencies within each content domain. Content domains that consist of more competencies will receive more emphasis on the test, through a greater number of test questions, than those with fewer competencies.

The following example illustrates the relationship of a multiple-choice test question to the content domain, competency, and descriptive statement to which it corresponds. This same direct relationship between multiple-choice test questions and their corresponding competencies applies to all NES tests.

