

Social Sciences: History Content Exam **Illinois Certification Testing System**

Testing Tips:

A. Preparation:

1. Register for the Social Sciences: History Content Test (114) with plenty of time to review the format and content of the exam
2. Familiarize yourself with the ICTS website.
<http://www.icts.nesinc.com/>
3. Check the overview of the Social Sciences: History content test.
http://www.icts.nesinc.com/PDFs/IL_SG_Generic_Front.pdf
http://www.icts.nesinc.com/PDFs/IL_field114_SG.pdf
4. Become familiar with the framework of the Social Sciences: History test.
http://www.icts.nesinc.com/PDFs/IL fld114_FW.pdf
5. Read all of the requirement and guidelines of the test.
 - o To get a general idea of what is expected.
 - o Read descriptive statements in order to see the main focus of test requirements.
6. Write a list of helpful actions that can be taken in order to pass the ICTS.
 - o Try to come up with twenty answers to really get the mind working.
 - o If you have taken it before write down questions you remember.
 - o Using the framework develop questions from each of the sections.
7. Do not solely rely on self-study. Study guides are proven to be effective.
8. Obtain test-preparation materials.
9. Do practice tests to become familiar with the material/testing technique.
10. Develop a study plan.
 - o Figure out what mode of study (group, library, bedroom, etc.) works best for you. Everyone studies differently.
11. Check out library books or other literature regarding the ICTS test.
 - o ICTS (REA) w/CD ROM – The Best Test Prep for the IL Certification Testing System. Available at Amazon.com for \$23.07
 - o ICTS (REA) – The Best Test Prep for the IL Certification Testing System. Available at Amazon.com for #22.00.
 - o Teacher Certification Tests 6th edition (Arco Guide to Teacher Certification Testing). \$14.00 at Amazon.com.
12. Check out other helpful websites.

http://study-guides.org/icts_study_guide.html

<http://www.flashcardsecrets.com/icts/>

<http://www.cliffsnotes.com/WileyCDA/Section/CliffsTestPrep.id-305389.html>

B. Study Strategies:

1. Review your old textbooks from all areas of the Social Sciences.
2. There are questions from all fields – start with what you know least about.
3. Ask for help. Talk to faculty for advice and friends who have taken it.
4. Plan out how much time per day can be allotted to studying.
 - o Take into account school, work, family responsibilities, etc.
5. The recommended time is two hours per day.
 - o Use more or less depending on ability, schedule, etc.
6. Pick a fixed study time and stick to it.
 - o Every night at 8p.m., or any time that works best.
7. Find a specific place to study.
 - o It will automatically put you in “study mode.”

C. Structure:

1. Look for any patterns in testing.
 - o It is a “standardized” test, after all.
2. Organize!
 - o Separate your review into subjects and sub-topics.
 - o Highlight the most important points.
3. Memorize
 - o Use acrostics such as “My Dear Aunt Sally.”
 - o Put words to a tune and sing it!
4. Flash Cards.
 - o Start with main ideas.
 - o Difficult material.
 - o Most important things to know!
 - o Keep them with you at all times.
 - o Use on the bus, in between classes, before bed at night.

D. Three days until test time:

1. Day One: go over material to study.
 - o Make a list of what is most important to know.
2. Day Two: take more practice tests.
 - o From a book or on any of the websites.
3. Day Three: fill in any gaps.
 - o Focus on the most difficult material.
4. List topics and sub-topics.
 - o In order to see what areas still need work.
5. Re-read and highlight.
 - o Focus on weak areas, and work to strengthen them.

E. The day of the test:

1. Wake up early and eat a good breakfast.
2. Make sure to arrive early.
3. Know where you are going – test site.
4. Dress comfortably-you will be there for a long time.
5. Read the directions very carefully.
 - Do not just skim over them.
6. Pace yourself and use your allotted time wisely.
7. Read each section thoroughly and carefully.
8. Mark answers neatly and clearly.
9. Check accuracy.
 - Double-check all answers.
10. Follow the rules!
 - No cell phones, notes, etc.

F. The actual test:

1. Think about your Reading Comprehension:
 - Always do the easy questions first.
 - Save the harder questions for last, so that time will not be wasted while you try and figure these out.
 - Read entire passage and questions before answering.
 - Know the common types of questions:
 - Main Idea
 - Specific Details
 - Drawing Inferences (finding the intended meaning).
 - Tone or Attitude (emotional state of passage/author).
 - Context Meaning (meaning of word in regards to context).
 - Technique (method of organization or writing style).
 - You must read and understand fast.
 - Make mental notes if needed.

<http://www.test-preparation.ca/teacher-certification/reading-comp.html>

2. Multiple Choice:

- Budget time – Pace yourself – Relax!
- Read **all** of the directions.
- Try to answer all of the questions.
- Do the easy questions first.
- Allot about 30 seconds per question/answer.
- Come back later for the harder questions.
- Eliminate the obvious wrong answer. And the “almost right” answer. Remember, there can only be **one** correct answer.
- Never assume facts.
- Your first answer is probably the right answer.

<http://www.test-preparation.ca/teacher-certification/multiple-choice.html>

3. Final Thoughts:

- o Read ALL directions. Underline key words in the directions that give indication as to how your answers are to be recorded and how they should be worded.
- o Budget your time. Start with a quick survey of the entire test to determine where you should begin. Don't rush. Wear a watch and pace yourself.
- o Answer questions strategically. First work on easier questions to familiarize yourself with the material. Move on to more difficult questions, eliminating answers you know are wrong and that do not seem to fit.
- o Use information from one question to help answer others
- o Don't stay on a problem when time is a factor. Think for a moment, and if nothing comes to you, then go on to the next problem.
- o Keep a positive attitude. If you begin to feel anxious or stressed, take a few deep breaths and relax for a moment.
- o When you are finished, look over the test. Watch out for errors and proofread. Think the answer is wrong? Studies indicate that if you were fairly certain you were correct the first time, your answer is probably right.
- o Remember you need to successfully complete 3 tests in order to complete the program and become a certified teacher in the State of Illinois: Basic Skills (096), Content (114) and Assessment of Professional Teaching: Grades 6-12 (103) (APT).
- o The state is placing a limit on the number of times you can take the test so make each one count.