TEST INFORMATION

This test was developed to enable schools to award credit to students for knowledge equivalent to that which is learned by students taking the course. The school may choose to award college credit to the student based on the achievement of a passing score. The passing score for each examination is determined by the school based on recommendations from the American Council on Education® (ACE). This minimum credit-awarding score is equal to the mean score of students in the norming sample who received a grade of C in the course. Some schools set their own standards for awarding credit and may require a higher score than the ACE recommendation. Students should obtain this information from the institution where they expect to receive credit.

CONTENT

The following topics, which are commonly taught in courses on this subject, are covered by this examination.

I. Vietnam Before 1940
   A. Religious and cultural traditions
   B. Chinese political and cultural domination
   C. A tradition of resistance to invaders
   D. The expansion of Vietnam
   E. French conquest and colonialism
   F. Development of nationalism
   G. Development of communism
   H. Ho Chi Minh

II. World War II, the Cold War, and the First Indochina War (1940-1955)
   A. Japanese occupation and the creation of the Viet Minh
   B. The effects of World War II on Vietnam
   C. Vietnamese declaration of independence
   D. Restoration of French rule
   E. Origins of containment
   F. U.S. geopolitical goals in Europe and Asia
   G. The Korean war and NSC 68
   H. Revolutionary war vs. French military strategies
   I. Eisenhower’s “New Look”
   J. Dienbienphu
   K. The Geneva Conference
   L. U.S. national security policy including SEATO

III. Diem and Nation-State Building (1955-1963)
   A. U.S. support for Diem
   B. Diem’s inadequacies
   C. U.S. military and economic assistance
   D. The National Liberation Front and growing insurgency
   E. JFK’s commitment to counter-insurgency
   F. Internal opposition including the Buddhist crisis
   G. The coup against Diem
IV. LBJ Americanizes the War (1964-1965)
   A. Political instability in Vietnam
   B. Introduction of the North Vietnamese Army
   C. The Tonkin Gulf Resolution
   D. The 1964 Campaign
   E. Flaming Dart to Rolling Thunder
   F. Introduction of U.S. combat troops (March through April 1965)
   G. U.S. open-ended commitment (July 1965)

V. America Takes Charge (1965-1967)
   A. Westmoreland’s strategy of attrition
   B. Measures of success
   C. The continuing air war
   D. The impact on Vietnamese society
   E. Stabilization of the Saigon regime
   F. America’s draft army
   G. War without fronts

VI. Homefront USA
   A. The Great Society: guns vs. butter
   B. The credibility gap
   C. Congressional dissent
   D. Television and the press
   E. The civil rights movement
   F. The genesis of the new left
   G. The draft and draft resistance

VII. Tet (1968)
   A. Vietnamese planning for the Tet offensive
   B. Communist objectives
   C. The Tet offensive
   D. Reactions in U.S. and Saigon
   E. LBJ decides not to run
   F. Bombing halt and beginning of peace talks
   G. The 1968 election

VIII. Vietnamizing the War (1969-1973)
   A. Nixon, Kissinger, and Vietnamization
   B. Justifications for Vietnamization (troop withdrawal)
   C. Pacification and the Phoenix program
   D. My Lai and the deterioration of the U.S. military
   E. Secret negotiations (1969-1971)
   F. The 1972 Spring offensive
   G. The October agreement
   H. The Christmas bombing
   I. Triangular diplomacy: the U.S., the Soviet Union, and China
   J. Paris Peace Accords (1973)

IX. The War at Home
   A. Campus unrest
   B. Peace activists and moratoria
   C. The Miami and Chicago conventions
   D. The counterculture, antiwar movement, and silent majority
   E. The Pentagon Papers

X. Cambodia and Laos
   A. The Geneva Accords (1954)
   B. JFK and Laotian neutrality (1962)
   C. The secret war in Laos
   D. Sihanouk and Cambodia’s neutrality
   E. Lon Nol and the U.S. incursion
   F. The secret bombing of Laos and Cambodia
   G. The Khmer Rouge and the fall of Phnom Penh (1975)
   H. The communist victory in Laos

XI. “A Decent Interval”
   A. The cease-fire violations
   B. Watergate and Nixon’s resignation
   C. Congressional passage of the war powers act
   D. The Great Spring Offensive

XII. U.S. Legacies and Lessons
   A. The Vietnam Syndrome
   B. The Cold War consensus
   C. Congress vs. the President
   D. The experience of returning vets
   E. Economic consequences
   F. U.S., Soviet, Chinese relations
   G. The impact on the U.S. military
   H. The impact on the media
   I. POWs and MIAs
   J. Indochina refugees (boat people)
   K. Collective national amnesia
Questions on the test require candidates to demonstrate the following abilities. Some questions may require more than one of the abilities.

- Knowledge of basic facts and terms (about 55-65% of the examination)
- Understanding of concepts and principles (about 15-25% of the examination)
- Ability to apply knowledge to specific cases or issues (about 10-20% of the examination)

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. For which of the following reasons did Ho Chi Minh, a confirmed Communist, seek United States support in 1945?
   (A) He did not trust the Soviet Union
   (B) He was a pragmatist, principally preoccupied with Vietnam’s salvation, and he would accept help where he could get it.
   (C) He knew that he would be turned down by the Americans, and then he could appeal more convincingly to the Soviets.
   (D) He had no hope of United States aid, but others in his administration urged him to appeal to the Americans.

2. The Chinese Communist victory in 1949 significantly altered the situation in Indochina because it resulted in
   (A) the introduction of large numbers of Chinese Communist troops into Indochina
   (B) provisions of war material and equipment to the Viet Minh
   (C) a shift of French military forces to the northern Indochina border
   (D) a formal military alliance between the Chinese and Vietnamese Communists

3. Which of the following was one of the important reasons why the United States military effort in South Vietnam was unsuccessful?
   (A) The United States attempted to fight a conventional war against a guerrilla force that avoided large battles.
   (B) The United States measures only attracted the support of the peasant masses and failed to gain the support of the local elites.
   (C) Counterinsurgency could not have been adapted to the terrain in Vietnam.
   (D) Counterinsurgency was unpopular politically in the United States.

4. One of the major counterinsurgency programs undertaken by the Diem government and the Kennedy administration was the
   (A) Phoenix program
   (B) Food-for-Peace program
   (C) Open Arms program
   (D) strategic hamlet program

5. In early 1964, which of the following best describes the Vietnamese Communists’ position in South Vietnam?
   (A) They were weakened by the strategic hamlet program.
   (B) They were stronger in the cities than the South Vietnamese.
   (C) They controlled approximately 40% of the countryside.
   (D) Their military successes outweighed their political successes.

6. When the United States took charge of the war, a major impact on Vietnamese society was a dramatic
   (A) reduction in religious intolerance
   (B) expansion of political democracy
   (C) influx of money and technology
   (D) improvement in education
7. What was the immediate reaction of President Johnson’s military and civilian advisors to the outcome of the Tet offensive?
   I. They were divided over what course of action to follow.
   II. They presented a united front in support of the President’s policies.
   III. They were unanimous in recommending the start of negotiations with the Communists.
   IV. They urged the President to commit more troops to Vietnam.
   (A) I and IV only
   (B) II and III only
   (C) III and IV only
   (D) II, III and IV only

8. Who were the Khmer Rouge?
   (A) Supporters of Prince Sihanouk
   (B) Cambodian Communists
   (C) The Cambodian non-Communist nationalists
   (D) The pro-American faction in Cambodia

9. “Credibility gap” was the phrase used to identify the
   (A) victory claims of the Vietnamese Communists
   (B) propaganda of the Vietnamese Communists
   (C) distance between events and official United States statements
   (D) disagreements between the United States and its allies over United States policy in Vietnam

10. The shooting of students at Kent State University came during demonstrations against the
    (A) war in general
    (B) renewed bombing in the North
    (C) mining of Haiphong Harbor
    (D) invasion of Cambodia

11. From the American perspective, one advantage of the 1973 Vietnam Agreement was that it
    (A) allowed the return of United States prisoners of war
    (B) allowed some North Vietnamese troops to stay in South Vietnam
    (C) settled the political issues that caused the war
    (D) ended the war

12. The War Powers Act was designed to ensure that
    (A) the President would have to obtain congressional support for long-term use of United States troops abroad
    (B) Congress would decide when and where to send United States troops
    (C) the President’s power to wage war would be virtually eliminated
    (D) a national referendum would have to be held before United States troops could be sent abroad

STUDYING FOR THE EXAMINATION

The following is a list of reference publications that were being used as textbooks in college courses of the same or similar title at the time the test was developed. Appropriate textbooks for study are not limited to those listed below. If you wish to obtain study resources to prepare for the examination, you may reference either the current edition of the following titles or textbooks currently used at a local college or university for the same class title. It is recommended that you reference more than one textbook on the topics outlined in this fact sheet. You should begin by checking textbook content against the content outlined on the front page of this Fact Sheet before selecting textbooks that cover the test content from which to study. Textbooks may be found at the campus bookstore of a local college or university offering a course on the subject.

Sources for study material suggested but not limited to the following:

The Public Broadcasting System video course, Vietnam: A Television History.


Current textbook used by a local college or university for a course on the subject.

CREDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Center For Adult Learning and Educational Credentials of the American Council on Education (ACE) has reviewed and evaluated the DSST examination development process. The American Council on Education has made the following recommendations:

Area or Course Equivalent: A History of the Vietnam War
Level: Lower-level baccalaureate
Amount of Credit: Three (3) semester hours
Source: ACE Commission on Educational Credit and Credentials
INFORMATION

Colleges and universities that would like additional information about the national norming, or assistance in local norming or score validation studies should write to: DSST Program, Prometric, 2000 Lenox Drive, 3rd Floor, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648.

It is advisable that schools develop a consistent policy about awarding credit based on scores from this test and that the policy be reviewed periodically. Prometric will be happy to help schools in this effort.