Introduction

The social studies and history standards provide teachers and curriculum coordinators with a summary of what history and social science content should be taught from grade to grade, prekindergarten through high school. Adapted from the highly rated California and Massachusetts curriculum frameworks, the standards incorporate the comments and suggestions of area teachers and administrators. The requirements strike a balance between U.S. and world history, as well as among the many disciplines of the social sciences.

The learning standards outline what learners of social science and history should know and demonstrate by the end of each grade or course. They detail the knowledge of history, geography, economics, and politics and government that students are expected to acquire at a particular grade level.[1]

The Organization of the Document

The learning standards for U.S. and world history are grouped in time periods commonly accepted by historians. We have selected essential topics that build a chronologically organized history and establish social science knowledge to set standards that can be taught and mastered within a specific time frame. We encourage teachers to elaborate on the content outlined here, to add topics they feel are important, and to organize material thematically. They also are encouraged to enrich the classroom experience by incorporating current events and issues that have a significant relationship to important historical themes or events under study.

These standards integrate the four major disciplines of history, geography, economics, and politics and government. They are not presented in separate strands, although grade 6 focuses on geography and grade 12 focuses on government, including U.S. and Washington, DC, governments. A coding system has been used throughout the document to indicate the disciplinary content stressed in a standard that details U.S. or world history. These include the principal disciplines of geography (G), economics (E), and politics and government (P); the characteristics of religious thought and ideas (R); and the social impact of events (S), military action (M), and intellectual thought (I) that have advanced civilizations.

Principles of U.S. Government

Grade 12 (One Semester)

PRINCIPLES OF U.S. GOVERNMENT

12.1. Students explain the fundamental principles and moral values of the American Republic as expressed in the U.S. Constitution and other essential documents of American democracy.

1. Analyze the influence of ancient Greek, Roman, English, and leading European political thinkers such as John Locke, Charles-Louis Montesquieu, Niccolò Machiavelli, and William Blackstone on the development of American government.
2. Discuss the character of American democracy and its promise and perils as articulated by Alexis de Tocqueville.
3. Explain how the U.S. Constitution reflects a balance between the classical republican concern with promotion of the public good and the classical liberal concern with protecting individual rights; and discuss how the basic premises of liberal constitutionalism and democracy are joined in the Declaration of Independence as "self-evident truths."
4. Explain how the Founding Fathers' realistic view of human nature led directly to the establishment of a constitutional system that limited the power of the governors and the governed as articulated in *The Federalist Papers.*
5. Describe the systems of separated and shared powers, the role of organized interests *(Federalist Paper Number 10),* checks and balances *(Federalist Paper Number 51),* the importance of an independent judiciary *(Federalist Paper Number 78),* enumerated powers, rule of law, federalism, and civilian control of the military.
6. Understand that the Bill of Rights limits the powers of the federal government and state governments.

12.2. Students formulate questions about and defend their analyses of tensions within our constitutional democracy and the importance of maintaining a balance between the following concepts: majority rule and individual rights; liberty and equality; state and national authority in a federal system; civil disobedience and the rule of law; freedom of the press and the right to a fair trial; and the relationship of religion and government.

BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

12.3. Students analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government as established by the U.S. Constitution.

1. Discuss Article I of the Constitution as it relates to the legislative branch, including eligibility for office and lengths of terms of representatives and senators; election to office; the roles of the House and Senate in impeachment proceedings; the role of the vice president; the enumerated legislative powers; and the process by which a bill becomes a law.
2. Explain the process through which the Constitution can be amended.
3. Identify their current representatives in the legislative branch of the national government.
4. Discuss Article II of the Constitution as it relates to the executive branch, including eligibility for office and length of term, election to and removal from office, the oath of office, and the enumerated executive powers.
5. Discuss Article III of the Constitution as it relates to judicial power, including the length of terms of judges and the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.
6. Explain the processes of selection and confirmation of Supreme Court justices.

Grade 12 (One Semester)

BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT *(continued)*

12.4. Students summarize landmark U.S. Supreme Court interpretations of the Constitution and its amendments.

1. Understand the changing interpretations of the Bill of Rights over time, including interpretations of the basic freedoms (religion, speech, press, petition, and assembly) articulated in the First Amendment and the due process and equal-protection-of-the-law clauses of the 14th Amendment.
2. Analyze judicial activism and judicial restraint and the effects of each policy over the decades (e.g., the Warren and Rehnquist courts).
3. Evaluate the effects of the Court's interpretations of the Constitution in *Marbury* v. *Madison*, *McCulloch* v. *Maryland*, and *United States* v. *Nixon*, with emphasis on the arguments espoused by each side in these cases.
4. Explain the controversies that have resulted over changing interpretations of civil rights, including those in *Plessy* v. *Ferguson*; *Brown* v. *Board of Education*; *Miranda* v. *Arizona*; *Regents of the University of California* v. *Bakke*; *Adar and Constructors, Inc.* v. *Pena*; and *United States v. Virginia (VMI)*.

12.5. Students analyze and compare the powers and procedures of the national, state, tribal, and local governments.

1. Explain how conflicts between levels of government and branches of government are resolved.
2. Identify the major responsibilities and sources of revenue for state and local governments.
3. Discuss reserved powers and concurrent powers of state governments.
4. Discuss the 9th and 10th amendments and interpretations of the extent of the federal government's power.
5. Explain how public policy is formed, including the setting of the public agenda and implementation of it through regulations and executive orders.
6. Compare the processes of lawmaking at each of the three levels of government, including the role of lobbying and the media.
7. Identify the organization and jurisdiction of federal, state, and local (e.g., California) courts and the interrelationships among them.
8. Understand the scope of presidential power and decision-making through examination of case studies, such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, passage of Great Society legislation, War Powers Act, Gulf War, and Bosnia.

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Grade 12 (One Semester)

ELECTIONS AND THE POLITICAL PROCESS

12.6. Students evaluate issues regarding campaigns for national, state, and local elective offices.

1. Analyze the origin, development, and role of political parties, noting those occasional periods in which there was only one major party or were more than two major parties.
2. Discuss the history of the nomination process for presidential candidates and the increasing importance of primaries in general elections.
3. Evaluate the roles of polls, campaign advertising, and the controversies over campaign funding.
4. Describe the means that citizens use to participate in the political process (e.g., voting, campaigning, lobbying, filing a legal challenge, demonstrating, petitioning, picketing, and running for political office).
5. Discuss the features of direct democracy in numerous states (e.g., the process of referendums and recall elections).
6. Analyze trends in voter turnout; the causes and effects of reapportionment and redistricting, with special attention to spatial districting and the rights of minorities; and the function of the electoral college.

12.7. Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the influence of the media on American political life.

1. Discuss the meaning and importance of a free and responsible press.
2. Describe the roles of broadcast, print, and electronic media, including the Internet, as means of communication in American politics.
3. Explain how public officials use the media to communicate with the citizenry and to shape public opinion.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENS

12.8. Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens, the relationships among them, and how they are secured.

1. Discuss the meaning and importance of each of the rights guaranteed under the Bill of Rights and how each is secured (e.g., freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, petition, and privacy).
2. Explain how economic rights are secured and their importance to the individual and to society (e.g., the right to acquire, use, transfer, and dispose of property; right to choose one's work; right to join or not join labor unions; copyright and patent).
3. Discuss the individual's legal obligations to obey the law, serve as a juror, and pay taxes.
4. Understand the obligations of civic-mindedness, including voting, being informed on civic issues, volunteering and performing public service, and serving in the military or alternative service.
5. Describe the reciprocity between rights and obligations, that is, why enjoyment of one's rights entails respect for the rights of others.
6. Explain how one becomes a citizen of the United States, including the process of naturalization (e.g., literacy, language, and other requirements).

Grade 12 (One Semester)

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENS *(continued)*

12.9. Students evaluate and take and defend positions on what the fundamental values and principles of civil society are (i.e., the autonomous sphere of voluntary personal, social, and economic relations that are not part of government), their interdependence, and the meaning and importance of those values and principles for a free society.

1. Explain how civil society provides opportunities for individuals to associate for social, cultural, religious, economic, and political purposes.
2. Explain how civil society makes it possible for people, individually or in association with others, to bring their influence to bear on government in ways other than voting and elections.
3. Discuss the historical role of religion and religious diversity.
4. Compare the relationship of government and civil society in constitutional democracies to the relationship of government and civil society in authoritarian and totalitarian regimes.

12.10. Students analyze the development and evolution of civil rights for women and minorities and how these advances were made possible by expanding rights under the U.S. Constitution.

1. Explain the Civil Rights movement and resulting legislation and legal precedents, including the Truman and Eisenhower-era integration policies and laws.
2. Trace the women's rights movement and resulting legislation and legal precedents.
3. Outline legislation and legal precedents that establish rights for the disabled, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asians, and other minority groups, including the tensions between protected categories (e.g., race) and nonprotected ones (*United States v. Carolene Products, Co.,* and "Famous Footnote Four").

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Grade 12 (One Semester)

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND THE ECONOMY

12.11. Students analyze the influence of the federal government on the American economy.

1. Explain how the role of government in a market economy includes providing for national defense, addressing environmental concerns, defining and enforcing property rights, attempting to make markets more competitive, and protecting consumer rights.
2. List the factors that may cause the costs of government actions to outweigh the benefits of those actions.
3. Explain the aims of government fiscal policies (taxation, borrowing, and spending) and their influence on production, employment, and price levels.
4. Explain progressive, proportional, and regressive taxation.
5. Outline how the Federal Reserve uses monetary tools to promote price stability, full employment, and economic growth.
6. Describe how the government responds to perceived social needs by providing public goods and services.
7. Explain major revenue and expenditure categories and their respective proportions in the budgets of the federal government.
8. Describe how federal tax and spending policies affect the national budget and the national debt.
9. Describe how federal antidiscrimination policies have affected the ability of minority groups to build and transfer wealth and resources (e.g., affirmative action in hiring, and federal labor and housing laws).

Grade 12 (One Semester)

COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT

12.12. Students analyze the origins, characteristics, and development of different political systems across time, with emphasis on the quest for political democracy, its advances, and its obstacles.

1. Explain how the different philosophies and structures of feudalism, mercantilism, socialism, fascism, communism, monarchies, parliamentary systems, and constitutional liberal democracies influence economic policies, social welfare policies, and human rights practices.
2. Compare the various ways in which power is distributed, shared, and limited in systems of shared powers and in parliamentary systems, including the influence and role of parliamentary leaders (e.g., William Gladstone and Margaret Thatcher).
3. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of federal, confederal, and unitary systems of government.
4. Describe for at least two countries the consequences of conditions that gave rise to tyrannies during certain periods (e.g., Italy, Japan, Haiti, Nigeria, and Cambodia).
5. Identify the forms of illegitimate power that 20th-century African, Asian, and Latin American dictators used to gain and hold office and the conditions and interests that supported them.
6. Identify the ideologies, causes, stages, and outcomes of major Mexican, Central American, and South American revolutions in the 19th and 20th centuries.
7. Describe the ideologies that give rise to communism, methods of maintaining control, and the movements to overthrow such governments in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland, including the roles of individuals (e.g., Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Pope John Paul II, Lech Walesa, and Vaclav Havel).
8. Identify the successes of relatively new democracies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the ideas, leaders, and general societal conditions that have launched and sustained, or failed to sustain, them.

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Glossary of Selected Terms

(with emphasis on terms that appear in K–8)

Amendment (constitutional): Changes in, or additions to, a constitution. Proposed by a two-thirds vote of both houses of Congress or by a convention called by Congress at the request of two-thirds of the state legislatures. Ratified by approval of three-fourths of the states.

Articles of Confederation: The first constitution of the United States, created in 1781. It established a weak national government and was replaced in 1789 by the Constitution of the United States.

Barter: The direct exchange of one good or service for another without the use of money.

B.C.E. and C.E.: Before the Common Era (formerly known as B.C.) and Common Era (formerly known as A.D.).

Bill of Rights: The first 10 amendments to the Constitution. Ratified in 1791, these amendments limit governmental power and protect the basic rights and liberties of individuals.

Bureaucracy: Administrative organizations that implement government policies.

Cabinet: Secretaries or chief administrators of the major departments of the federal government. Cabinet secretaries are appointed by the president with the consent of the Senate.

Capital: Manufactured resources such as tools, machinery, and buildings that are used in the production of other goods and services (e.g., school buildings, books, tables, and chairs are some examples of capital used to produce education). This is sometimes called real capital.

Checks and balances: Constitutional mechanisms that authorize each branch of the government to share powers with the other branches and thereby check their activities (e.g., the president may veto legislation passed by Congress; the Senate must confirm major executive appointments; and the courts may declare acts of Congress unconstitutional).

Citizen: A member of a political society who therefore owes allegiance to the government and is entitled to its protection.

Civil rights: Protections and privileges of personal liberty given to all U.S. citizens by the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

Command economy: A type of economic system in which the resources are state owned and their allocation and use are determined by the centralized decisions of a planning authority (e.g., the former Soviet Union).

Common or public good: A good that is to the benefit or in the interest of a politically organized society as a whole.

Comparative advantage: The idea that countries gain when they produce those items that they are most efficient at producing.

Competitive behavior: When a business or individual acts in a self-interested way to increase wealth.

Concurrent powers: Powers that may be exercised by both the federal and state governments (e.g., levying taxes, borrowing money, and spending for the general welfare).

Confederal: Relating to a confederation.

Confederate: A group of states more or less permanently united for common purposes.

Consumer: A person or organization that purchases or uses a product or service.

Culture: The learned behaviors of people, such as belief systems, languages, social relations, institutions, organizations, and material goods, such as food, clothing, buildings, and technology.

Deflation: A general lowering of prices; the opposite of inflation.

Delegated powers: Powers granted to the national government under the Constitution, as enumerated in Articles I, II, and III.

Democracy: Practice of the principle of equality of rights, opportunity, and treatment.

Demographic: The statistical data of a population (e.g., average age, income, and education).

Developed nation: Countries with high levels of well-being, as measured by economic, social, and technological sophistication.

Developing nation: Countries with low levels of well-being, as measured by economic, social, and technological sophistication.

Diffusion: The spread of people, ideas, technology, and products between places.

Due process of law: The right of every citizen to be protected against arbitrary action of the government.

Economic growth: An increase in an economy's ability to produce goods and services, which brings about a rise in standards of living.

Emigration: People moving out of a country (or other political unit).

English Bill of Rights: An act passed by the Parliament of England in 1689 that limited the power of the monarch. This document established Parliament as the most powerful branch of the English government.

Entrepreneur: A person who organizes, operates, and assumes the risk for a business venture.

Equal protection of the law: The idea that no individual or group may receive special privileges from nor be unjustly discriminated against by the law.

Exchange rate: The price of one currency in terms of another (e.g., pesos per dollar).

Federal Reserve System: A system of 12 district banks and a board of governors that regulates the activities of financial institutions and controls the money supply.

Federalism: A form of political organization in which governmental power is divided between a central government and territorial subdivisions; in the United States, it is divided among the national, state, and local governments.

The Federalist Papers: A series of essays written by Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison that was published to support the adoption of the proposed U.S. Constitution.

Feudalism: A political and economic system in which a king or queen share power with the nobility, who allow the common people to use their land in return for services.

Fiscal policy: A policy of government taxation and/or expenditure to change the level of output, employment, or prices.

Foreign policy: Policies of the federal government directed to matters beyond U.S. borders, especially with regard to relations with other countries.

Human capital: The knowledge and skills that enable workers to be productive.

Human characteristics: The patterns that people make on the surface of the Earth, such as cities, roads, canals, and farms, and other ways people change the Earth.

Immigration: People moving to a country (or other political unit).

Impeachment: The act of accusing a public official of misconduct in office by presenting formal charges against him or her in the lower house, with a trial to be held in the upper house.

Incentive: A benefit offered to encourage people to act in certain ways.

Inflation: A general rise in the level of prices.

Initiative: A form of direct democracy in which the voters of a state can propose a law by gathering signatures and having the proposition placed on the ballot.

Interdependence: Reliance on people in other places for information, resources, goods, and services.

Isolationism: The belief that the United States should not be involved in world affairs and should avoid involvement in foreign wars.

Judicial review: A doctrine that permits the federal courts to declare unconstitutional, and thus null and void, acts of Congress, the executive branch, and the states. The precedent for judicial review was established in the 1803 case *Marbury v. Madison*.

Justice: The fair distribution of benefits and burdens, correction of wrongs and injuries, or use of fair procedures in gathering information and making decisions.

Land use: How people use the Earth's surface (e.g., urban, rural, agricultural, range, and forest), often subdivided into more specific uses (e.g., retail, low-density housing, and industrial).

Landform: A description of the Earth's shape at a place (e.g., mountain range, plateau, and floodplain).

Latitude: The angular distance north or south of the equator that is measured in degrees along a line of longitude.

Legend: A map key that explains the meaning of map symbols.

Longitude: The angular distance east or west that is almost always measured with respect to the prime meridian that runs north and south through Greenwich, England.

Magna Carta: The document signed by King John of England in 1215 A.D. that limited the king's power and guaranteed certain basic rights; it is considered the beginning of constitutional government in England.

Market: Any setting in which an exchange occurs between buyers and sellers.

Market economy: A system in which most resources are owned by individuals and the interaction between buyers and sellers determines what is made, how it is made, and how much of it is made.

Market price: The price at which the quantity of goods and services demanded by consumers and the quantity supplied by producers are the same. This is sometimes called the equilibrium price.

Mayflower Compact: A document drawn up by the Pilgrims in 1620 while aboard the Mayflower, before landing at Plymouth Rock. The compact provided a legal basis for self-government.

Mercantilism: An economic and political policy in which the government regulates industries, trade, and commerce with the national aim of obtaining a favorable balance of trade.

Monarchy: A type of government in which political power is exercised by a single ruler under the claim of divine or hereditary right.

Monetary policies: Management of the money supply and interest rates to influence economic activity.

National security: The condition of a nation, in terms of threats, especially threats from external sources.

Opportunity cost: The value of the next best alternative that must be given up when a choice is made (e.g., the opportunity cost of studying on a Saturday night is the fun you are missing by not going to the dance).

Principle: A basic rule that guides or influences thought or action.

Progressive tax: A tax structure such that people who earn more money are charged a higher percentage of their income (e.g., the federal income tax).

Property rights: The rights of an individual to own property and keep the income earned from it.

Proportional tax: A tax structure such that all people pay about the same percentage of their incomes in taxes (e.g., a flat rate tax).

Protectionism: The practice of protecting domestic industries from foreign competition by imposing import duties or quotas.

Public service: Service to local, state, or national communities through appointed or elected office.

Ratify: To confirm by expressing consent, approval, or formal sanction.

Referendum: A form of direct democracy in which citizens of a state, through gathering signatures, can require that a legislative act come before the people as a whole for a vote. The process also allows the legislature to send any proposal for law to the people for a vote.

Region: A larger-sized territory that includes many smaller places, all or most of which share similar attributes, such as climate, landforms, plants, soils, language, religion, economy, government, or other natural or cultural attribute.

Regressive tax: A tax structure such that people who earn more pay a smaller percentage of their income in taxes (e.g., sales taxes).

Representative democracy: A form of government in which power is held by the people and exercised indirectly through elected representatives who make decisions.

Republicanism: A system of government in which power is held by the voters and is exercised by elected representatives responsible for promoting the common welfare.

Resources: Land, labor, capital, and entrepreneurship used in the production of goods and services. A part of the natural environment that people value, such as soil, oil, iron, or water.

Revolution: A complete or drastic change of government and the rules by which government is conducted.

Rule of law: The principle that every member of a society, even a ruler, must follow the law.

Separation of powers: The division of governmental power among several institutions that must cooperate in decision-making.

Sovereignty: The ultimate, supreme power in a state (e.g., in the United States, sovereignty rests with the people).

Spatial reasoning: Pertaining to distribution, distance, direction, areas, and other aspects of space on the Earth's surface.

Specialization: When a business focuses on producing a limited number of goods and leaves the production of other goods to other businesses. Specialization also describes how each person working to produce a good might work on one part of the production instead of producing the whole good (e.g., in a shoe factory one person cuts the leather, another person sews it, and another glues it to the sole).

Suffrage: The right to vote.

Supply: The quantity of a product or service that a producer is willing and able to offer for sale at each possible price.

Tariff: A tax on an imported good.

Thematic map: A map showing the distribution (or statistical properties) of cultural or natural features, such as a thematic map of unemployment or a thematic map of rainfall.

Theocracy: Any government in which the political leaders also are the religious leaders and they rule as representatives of the deity.

Totalitarianism: A centralized government that does not tolerate parties of differing opinion and that exercises dictatorial control over many aspects of life.

Treaty: A formal agreement between sovereign nations to create or restrict rights and responsibilities. In the United States, all treaties must be approved by a two-thirds vote in the Senate.

Unitary government: A government system in which all governmental authority is vested in a central government from which regional and local governments derive their powers (e.g., Great Britain and France, as well as the American states within their spheres of authority).

United Nations: An international organization comprising most of the nations of the world that was formed in 1945 to promote peace, security, and economic development.

Urbanization: The process whereby more people live and work in cities.

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Related Resources also Available

The Office of Academic Services also has developed a number of other resources to help teachers, administrators, students, parents, and community members better understand the new learning standards. These resources include:

- Grade-level curriculum guides, with sample learning activities, month-by-month scope and sequence suggestions, sample test items, and other resources.
- Grade-level parent guides to the standards, translated into several languages.
- Grade-level posters, which should be displayed in every classroom.

These and other materials are available on the DCPS Web site at www.k12.dc.us.

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