

SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

EIGHTH GRADE

Introduction

A significant focus of the eighth grade civics course is on the U.S. Constitution, its underlying principles and ideas, and the form of government it created. Students will analyze the major concepts of republicanism, federalism, checks and balances, separation of powers, and individual rights. They will compare the U.S. system of government with other political systems. Students will analyze the strategic importance of places to the United States. Students will examine the impact of individuals, political parties and interest groups on the American political system. They will identify the rights, duties, and responsibilities of students. In addition, students will investigate the process by which decisions are made in the American market economy and explain the government's role in it.

History

- 1. The student will analyze the fundamental beliefs which resulted in the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, which form the basis of the constitutional system of government of the United States.**
 - a. Analyze the principles and ideas that underlie the Declaration of Independence.
 - b. Examine how the federal government serves the purposes set forth in the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution.
 - c. Analyze how the Federalist Papers explain the principles of the American Constitutional system of government.
 - d. Evaluate constitutional provisions for limiting the role of government (e.g. republicanism, checks and balances, federalism, separation of powers, popular sovereignty, individual rights).
 - e. Analyze the processes by which the U.S. Constitution can be changed.
 - f. Discuss the contributions of the significant individuals in the field of government and politics (e.g. John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Abraham Lincoln, George Washington).

- 2. The student will analyze the structure, history, and functioning of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of state and federal governments.**
 - a. Analyze the structure and functions of the legislative branch of government, including the bicameral structure of Congress, the role of committees, and the procedure for enacting laws.
 - b. Analyze the structure and functions of the executive branch of government, including the constitutional powers of the president, the growth of presidential power, and the role of the Cabinet and executive departments.

- c. Analyze the structure and functions of the judicial branch of government, including the federal court system and types of jurisdiction.
 - d. Explain how certain provisions of the U.S. Constitution provide for checks and balances among the three branches of government.
 - e. Explain the major responsibilities of the federal government for domestic and foreign policy.
 - f. Compare the structure and functions of the Oklahoma state government to the federal system.
 - g. Analyze the structure and functions of local government.
- 3. The student will understand the concept of federalism.**
- a. Explain why the Founding Fathers created a distinctly new form of federalism and adopted a federal system of government instead of a unitary system.
 - b. Categorize government powers as national, state, or shared.
 - c. Analyze historical conflicts over the respective roles of national and state governments
 - d. Evaluate the limits on the national and state governments in the U.S. federal system of government.
- 4. The student will recognize major political ideas and forms of government in history.**
- a. Explain major political ideas in history (e.g. natural law, natural rights, divine right of kings, social contract theory).
 - b. Identify the characteristics of classic forms of government (e.g. absolute monarchy, authoritarianism, classic republic, despotism, feudalism, liberal democracy, totalitarianism).
- 5. The student will understand the role of the United States in international affairs.**
- a. Analyze how domestic politics, the principles of the United States Constitution, foreign policy, and economics affect relations with other countries.
 - b. Evaluate circumstances in which the United States has politically influenced other nations and how other nations have influenced the politics and society of the United States.
 - c. Understand how national politics and international affairs are interrelated with the politics and interests of the state.
 - d. Understand the purpose and function of international government and non-governmental organizations of the world.
- 6. The student will understand the similarities and differences that exist among the U.S. system of government and other political systems.**
- a. Compare the U.S. system of government with other political systems (e.g. monarchy, dictatorship, theocracy).
 - b. Analyze advantages and disadvantages of different systems of government (e.g. federal, unitary, presidential, parliamentary).

Geography

- 1. The student will analyze the physical attributes of the United States.**
 - a. Name and locate physical features of the United States.
 - b. Identify the climate of the United States.
 - c. Identify natural resources of the United States.
 - d. Locate political and natural boundaries of the United States.
- 2. The student will locate and explain why certain places and regions are important to the United States (e.g. Europe, Russia, Middle East, Africa, Asia, the Pacific).**
 - a. Identify major physical features of selected regions.
 - b. Identify natural resources of selected regions. Explain how these resources are distributed.
 - c. Describe cultural influences of selected regions.
- 3. The student will analyze and evaluate the consequences of a government policy that affects the physical and/or human characteristics of a region.**

Civics

- 1. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the political process at the local, state, and national levels of government.**
 - a. Compare different methods of filling public offices, including elected and appointed offices at the local, state, and national levels.
 - b. Identify the functions of political parties. Compare the similarities and differences of political parties.
 - c. Analyze the two-party system. Evaluate the role of third parties in the United States.
 - d. Analyze campaigns for elective office.
 - e. Describe voter registration and participation.
 - f. Describe the role of the Electoral College in the election of the President and Vice President.
 - g. Define the popular vote.
 - h. Examine the responsibilities of political leaders and the qualities of good leadership.
 - i. Elaborate on the variety, tactics, and influence of interest groups in the formation of public opinion.
- 2. The student will understand the rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.**
 - a. Explain the roles of limited government and the rule of law to the protection of individual rights.
 - b. Analyze the rights guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, including first amendment freedoms.
 - c. Analyze issues addressed in selected cases that involve Supreme Court interpretations of rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

- d. Investigate the role of each branch of government in protecting the rights of individuals.
 - e. Explain the impact of the incorporation doctrine involving due process and the Bill of Rights on individual rights, federalism, and majority rule.
- 3. The student will describe the organization, functions, and jurisdiction of courts within the American judicial system.**
- a. Describe the exercise of judicial review.
 - b. Explain court proceedings in civil and criminal cases.
 - c. Examine how due process protections seek to ensure justice.
- 4. The student will describe the different kinds of law.**
- a. Define criminal law (e.g. homicide, assault and battery).
 - b. Identify crimes against property (e.g. arson, vandalism, robbery).
 - c. Describe juvenile law.
 - d. Define civil law (e.g. housing, family, labor, contract, tort).
- 5. The student will demonstrate knowledge of citizenship and the rights, duties, and responsibilities of citizens.**
- a. Describe the process by which an individual becomes a citizen of the United States.
 - b. Describe the First Amendment freedoms of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition, and the rights guaranteed by due process and equal protection of the laws.
 - c. Describe the duties of citizenship (e.g. obeying the laws, paying taxes, defending the nation, serving in court).
 - d. Examine the responsibilities of citizenship (e.g. registering and voting, communicating with government officials, participating in political campaigns, keeping informed about current issues).
 - e. Evaluate how civic and social duties address community needs and serve the public good.

Economics

- 1. The student will demonstrate knowledge of how economic decisions are made in the market place.**
- a. Explain the basic elements of economics as they apply to consumers (e.g. scarcity, opportunity costs, cost/benefit analysis, supply and demand).
 - b. Compare the differences among free market, command, and mixed economies.
 - c. Describe the characteristics of the United States economy, including free markets, private property, profit, and competition.
 - d. Analyze the role of self-interest, incentives, property rights, competition, and corporate responsibility in the market economy.
 - e. Investigate the indicators of an economy's performance (e.g. gross domestic product, inflation, unemployment rate).

2. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the role of government in the United States economy.

- a. Examine competition in the market place.
- b. Explain the creation of public goods and services.
- c. Describe the impact of taxation. Recognize the reasons for the 16th amendment, spending, and borrowing.
- d. Understand the role of economic institutions in the United States, including the Federal Reserve Board, trade unions, banks, investors, and the stock market.
- e. Describe the types of business organizations and the role of entrepreneurship.