

Family-Friendly Guides to the SC Social Studies Standards for United States Government

The South Carolina Social Studies College- and Career-Ready Standards:

- Outline the knowledge and skills students must master so that, as high-school graduates, they have the expertise needed to be successful in college or careers.
- Provide a set of grade-level standards that offer opportunities for inquiry so that students may apply their learning in real world situations.
- Ensure that no matter where a student lives in South Carolina, the expectations for learning are the same.

Human knowledge now doubles about every three years. Therefore, revision of South Carolina's standards occurs periodically to respond to this growth of knowledge and increase of needed skills so our students will be ready for college or jobs. The College- and Career-Ready Standards prepare students for dealing with the growing mass of information by not only emphasizing content knowledge but by also stressing discipline-specific skills, an avenue for thematic learning, and opportunities for student inquiry in every grade level.

South Carolinians developed these academic standards for South Carolina's children. The Social Studies Standards are aligned with the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate, which summarizes the knowledge, skills, and habits employers expect (See http://sccompetes.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Profileof-the-South-Carolina-Graduate_Updated.pdf). The Profile demands world-class knowledge and skills, emphasizes critical thinking and problem solving, communication, and interpersonal skills.

How to Read this Document:

The 2019 South Carolina Social Studies College and Career Ready Standards are made up of four components that work together to offer students an opportunity to learn Social Studies by engaging with content, discipline-specific skills, thematic learning, and inquiry. This document is designed to highlight these four individual components to show how they combine to make up your student's Social Studies class.

Contained within is a summary of the course, a description of the content that will be explored, a list of the discipline specific skills along with how they translate to the grades above or below them, a list of possible questions for inquiry for your student, and additional resources.

Summary of the course:

Students study United States Government beginning with the historical and philosophical principles that led to the development of the American constitutional democracy and how those fundamental ideas have continued to sustain America's democratic society. Students will learn how various powers are granted and distributed among the different branches and levels of government, and how checks and balances prevent one branch from overpowering the others. Additionally, students will investigate how American political values are formed and how government functions through individual participation and policy making. In order to continue to thrive, a strong democracy relies on active participation by informed individuals dedicated to upholding the rule of law and individual rights. Overall, the study of United States Government provides a basis for students to develop the skills necessary to live and thrive in America's constitutional democracy and participate in society as active and informed citizens.

Family Friendly Guide for United States Government

Content Exploration

Standard	Summary
1: Foundations of Democracy	Students will explore how the principles of American democracy are reflected in the founding documents and actions of federal, state, and local government entities. The interpretation and application of American democratic principles continue to evolve and be debated.
2: Government Structure	Students will explore how in the American constitutional democracy; power is widely distributed, and checks prevent one branch of government from becoming too powerful and seizing powers from the other branches of government. National, state, and local governments are in positions where they must all compete and cooperate in order to govern effectively.
3: The Political Process	Students will explore how American political beliefs are shaped by an understanding of founding principles, core values, and changing demographics that in turn shape one's belief about government and ideological trends related to public policy. Governing is achieved through an individual's participation in government both directly and indirectly which results in multiple avenues for influence on the policy making process.
4: Citizenship	Students will explore how a strong constitutional democracy requires active participation on behalf of the people living under its authority. Knowledge of how to become a citizen, the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and an understanding of how to participate in the political process helps to create civic engagement and preserve the American constitutional government.

Skills Focus

Skills are necessary across the social studies for the student’s understanding of the content to be taught at each grade level. The study of history, economics, geography, and civics and government each require unique, discipline-specific practices and these practices are embedded in each standard through individual indicators.

Skill	Expression of the Skill
Establish Relationships	Clearly state, define, explain, and draw connections between ideas and terms.
Interpret	Gather, interpret, and evidence, including primary and secondary sources, to analyze data and establish an informed opinion.
Communicate and Conclude	Utilize research from a variety of sources to discuss policies and ideas in order to create a well-developed argument.
Informed Participation	Use acquired knowledge to engage in the governing process through informed decision making.

Themes Focus

Thematic instruction allows for information to be categorized into organized concepts. Analysis of overlapping themes allow students to move away from memorization of historical events and toward becoming 21st century learners who can use thematic content for new learning, problem solving, and genuine inquiry. Thematic instruction allows for students to make connections between content within a course and between various courses to deepen their understanding. Social Studies involves the development of civic dispositions and working with instructional themes to allow students to not only learn social studies content, but to apply flexible thinking to the content and be able to address societal issues in a responsible manner.

Theme Name	Theme Description
Civic Engagement	The Civic Engagement theme encourages the study of and the importance of active participation in the constitutional democracy of the United States. Active civic engagement reflects personal values and a society’s prioritization of civil rights and responsibilities. American constitutional democracy functions upon the key ideas of balance of powers, the establishment of government by the consent of the governed, and federalism. These principles guide governmental leaders in creating and enforcing laws that support fundamental American political values.
Political Values and Institutions	The Political Values and Institutions theme encourages the study of founding documents and philosophies, the socio-political context in which they were created and their importance in the continuing development of the constitutional democracy found in the United States. A practical knowledge of laws, politics, and governmental structure at the local, state, national, and global level is important in the development of an informed, involved citizenry.
Process of Law	The Process of Law theme encourages the study of the creation, execution, and interpretation of law in the United States political system. Founding principles guide the public policies developed to address new challenges and issues. By design, effective governmental decision making at the local, state, national, and global levels is a complex process that involves compromise and consensus building.

Inquiry Focus

Inquiry supports students’ learning by offering an avenue for discovery about the world around them. Using the tools students learn in their Social Studies classes, the possible questions for inquiry engage students in discovery by encouraging them to be inquisitive and analyze information. This allows them to make arguments and draw conclusions about the content with which they engage by applying the discipline-specific skills for their course.

Possible Questions for Inquiry for your United States Government Student:

- What is the purpose of government?
- How did early democracies, republics, Enlightenment principles, and English law influence and impact the foundation of the American constitutional democracy? What had the greatest impact on the foundation of the American constitutional democracy?
- How does the Constitution allow for political participation from individuals, groups, and states?
- How has the American idea of constitutional government shaped American society?

- Evaluate the role of the founding documents in the execution of the American democracy.
- Evaluate the idea of having both civil rights and civil responsibilities and how it influenced the founding ideals of the United States. What is more important, civil rights or civil responsibilities?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of each branch of government, and how do they apply to the function of government and my life?
- Does the amendment process contribute to a stable government?
- What is the purpose of federalism?
- What is the changing role of state government within the American Constitutional government?
- What is the role of the rule of law within the court system in the United States?
- What challenges does our system of government face in meeting our country's changing population?
- When should Executive Privilege be exercised?
- What is the role of citizens in the development of government policy?
- What are the types of public policy in American government?
- What is the impact of American core values on trends in political ideology over time?
- What is the role of linkage institutions in trends in the development and changes to American political parties?
- Does the media have a positive or negative impact on the American people?
- What role should social media play in elections?
- Is the Electoral College needed in the 21st Century?
- How have Americans created political change through collective and individual action?
- What changing values have influenced the changing qualifications for citizenship?
- How has the Supreme Court extended and restricted rights over time?
- What are the various types of rights granted by the Constitution?
- What can you do to make our country better?

Additional Resources:

- [2019 South Carolina Social Studies College- and- Career- Ready Standards](#)
 - The full standards document can be found by clicking the link above, or by visiting: <https://ed.sc.gov/instruction/standards-learning/social-studies/standards/>
- [South Carolina Social Studies Instructional Guides](#)
 - The most updated Alignment Guides and Inquiry Units of Instruction can be found by clicking the link above, or by visiting: <https://ed.sc.gov/instruction/standards-learning/social-studies/resources/>
- [South Carolina ETV](#)
 - The site may also be found by visiting: <https://www.sctv.org/>
- [South Carolina Remote Learning](#)
 - These are websites that are identified by grade level and content range for your student.
 - The site may also be found by visiting: <https://scremotelearning.com/parents-students/>

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