

National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)

Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

Standard

I. Culture

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *culture and cultural diversity*, so that the learner can

- a. explore and describe similarities and differences in the ways groups, societies, and cultures address similar human needs and concerns;
- b. give examples of how experiences may be interpreted differently by people from diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference;
- c. describe ways in which language, stories, folktales, music, and artistic creations serve as expressions of culture and influence behavior of people living in a particular culture;
- d. compare ways in which people from different cultures think about and deal with their physical environment and social conditions;
- e. give examples and describe the importance of cultural unity and diversity within and across groups.

II, Time, Continuity, & Change

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *the ways human beings view themselves in and over time*, so that the learner can:

- a. demonstrate an understanding that different people may describe the same event or situation in diverse ways, citing reasons for the differences in views;
- b. demonstrate an ability to use correctly vocabulary associated with time such as past, present, future, and long ago; read and construct simple timelines; identify examples of change; and recognize examples of cause and effect relationships;
- c. compare and contrast different stories or accounts about past events, people, places, or situations, identifying how they contribute to our understanding of the past;
- d. identify and use various sources for reconstructing the past, such as documents, letters, diaries, maps, textbooks, photos, and others;
- e. demonstrate an understanding that people in different times and places view the world differently;
- f. use knowledge of facts and concepts drawn from history, along with elements of historical inquiry, to in-

form decision-making about and action-taking on public issues.

III, People, Places, & Environments

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *people, places, and environments*, so that the learner can:

- a. construct and use mental maps of locales, regions, and the world that demonstrate understanding of relative location, direction, size, and shape;
- b. interpret, use, and distinguish various representations of the earth, such as maps, globes, and photographs;
- c. use appropriate resources, data sources, and geographic tools such as atlases, data bases, grid systems, charts, graphs, and maps to generate, manipulate, and interpret information;
- d. estimate distance and calculate scale;
- e. locate and distinguish among varying landforms and geographic features, such as mountains, plateaus, islands, and oceans;
- f. describe and speculate about physical system changes, such as seasons, climate and weather, and the water cycle;
- g. describe how people create places that reflect ideas, personality, culture, and wants and needs as they design homes, playgrounds, classrooms, and the like;
- h. examine the interaction of human beings and their physical environment, the use of land, building of cities, and ecosystem changes in selected locales and regions;
- i. explore ways that the earth's physical features have changed over time in the local region and beyond and how these changes may be connected to one another;
- j. observe and speculate about social and economic effects of environmental changes and crises resulting from phenomena such as floods, storms, and drought;
- k. consider existing uses and propose and evaluate alternative uses of resources and land in home, school, community, the region, and beyond.

IV. Individual Development & Identity

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *individual development and identity*, so that the learner can:

- a. describe personal changes over time, such as those related to physical development and personal interests;
- b. describe personal connections to place—especially place as associated with immediate surroundings;
- c. describe the unique features of one's nuclear and extended families;
- d. show how learning and physical development affect behavior;
- e. identify and describe ways family, groups, and community influence the individual's daily life and personal choices;
- f. explore factors that contribute to one's personal identity such as interests, capabilities, and perceptions;
- g. analyze a particular event to identify reasons individuals might respond to it in different ways;
- h. work independently and cooperatively to accomplish goals.

V. Individuals, Groups, & Institutions

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions*, so that the learner can:

- a. identify roles as learned behavior patterns in group situations such as student, family member, peer play group member, or club member;
- b. give examples of and explain group and institutional influences such as religious beliefs, laws, and peer pressure, on people, events, and elements of culture;
- c. identify examples of institutions and describe the interactions of people with institutions;
- d. identify and describe examples of tensions between and among individuals, groups, or institutions, and how belonging to more than one group can cause internal conflicts;
- e. identify and describe examples of tensions between and individual's beliefs and government policies and laws;
- f. give examples of the role of institutions in furthering both continuity and change;

- g. show how groups and institutions work to meet individual needs and promote the common good, and identify examples of where they fail to do so.

VI. Power, Authority, & Governance

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance*, so that the learner can:

- a. examine the rights and responsibilities of the individual in relation to his or her social group, such as family, peer groups, and school class;
- b. explain the purpose of government;
- c. give examples of how government does or does not provide for the needs and wants of people, establish order and security, and manage conflict;
- d. recognize how groups and organizations encourage unity and deal with diversity to maintain order and security;
- e. distinguish among local, state, and national government and identify representative leaders at these levels such as mayor, governor, and president;
- f. identify and describe factors that contribute to cooperation and cause disputes within and among groups and nations;
- g. explore the role of technology in communications, transportation, information-processing, weapons development, or other areas as it contributes to or helps resolve conflicts;
- h. recognize and give examples of the tensions between the wants and needs of individuals and groups, and concepts such as fairness, equity, and justice.

VII. Production, Distribution, & Consumption

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *how people organize for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services*, so that the learner can:

- a. give examples that show how scarcity and choice govern our economic decisions;
- b. distinguish between needs and wants;
- c. identify examples of private and public goods and services;
- d. give examples of the various institutions that make up economic systems such as families, workers, banks, labor unions, government agencies, small businesses, and large corporations;

- e. describe how we depend upon workers with specialized jobs and the ways in which they contribute to the productions and exchange of goods and services;
- f. describe the influence of incentives, values, traditions, and habits on economic decisions;
- g. explain and demonstrate the role of money in everyday life;
- h. describe the relationship of price to supply and demand;
- i. use economic concepts such as supply, demand, and price to help explain events in the community and nation;
- j. apply knowledge of economic concepts in developing a response to a current local economic issue, such as how to reduce the flow of trash into a rapidly filling landfill.

VIII. Science, Technology, & Society

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *relationships among science, technology, and society*, so that the learner can:

- a. identify and describe examples in which science and technology have changed the lives of people, such as in homemaking, childcare, work, transportation, and communication;
- b. identify and describe examples in which science and technology have led to changes in the physical environment, such as the building of dams and levees, offshore oil drilling, medicine from rain forests, and loss of rain forests due to extraction of resources or alternative uses;
- c. describe instances in which changes in values, beliefs, and attitudes have resulted from new scientific and technological knowledge, such as conservation of resources and awareness of chemicals harmful to life and the environment;
- d. identify examples of laws and policies that govern scientific and technological applications, such as the Endangered Species Act and environmental protection policies;
- e. suggest ways to monitor science and technology in order to protect the physical environmental, individual rights, and the common good.

IX. Global Connections

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *global connections and independence*, so that the learner can:

- a. explore ways that language, art, music, belief systems, and other cultural elements may facilitate global understanding or lead to misunderstanding;
- b. give examples of conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among individuals, groups, and nations;

- c. examine the effects of changing technologies on the global community;
- d. explore causes, consequences, and possible solutions to persistent, contemporary, and emerging global issues, such as pollution and endangered species;
- e. examine the relationships and tensions between personal wants and needs and various global concerns, such as use of imported oil, land use, and environmental protection;
- f. investigate concerns, issues, standards, and conflicts related to universal human rights, such as the treatment of children, religious groups, and effects of war.

X. Civic Ideals & Practices

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of *the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic*, so that the learner can:

- a. identify key ideals of the United States' democratic republican form of government, such as individual human dignity, liberty justice, equality, and the rule of law, and discuss their application in specific situations;
- b. identify examples of rights and responsibilities of citizens;
- c. locate, access, organize, and apply information about an issue of public concern from multiple points of view;
- d. identify and practice selected forms of civic discussion and participation consistent with the ideals of citizens in a democratic republic;
- e. explain actions citizens can take to influence public policy decisions;
- f. recognize that a variety of formal and informal factors influence and shape public policy;
- g. examine the influence of public opinion on personal decision-making and government policy on public issues;
- h. explain how public policies and citizen behaviors may or may not reflect the stated ideals of a democratic republican form of government;
- i. describe how public policies are used to address issues of public concern;
- j. recognize and interpret how the "common good" can be strengthened through various forms of citizen action.