

Iowa Core – Davenport Schools
Priority Essential Concepts and Skills for Kindergarten Social Studies
with Details and Examples

Introduction

Social studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.

*Definition of Social Studies
National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)*

The founders of our country emphasized that the vitality and security of a democracy depends upon the education and willingness of its citizens to participate actively in society. This level of participation requires civic competence. In other words, it is imperative that our future generations gain an understanding of the core concepts of social studies. Life in the United States within our democratic system is constantly changing which creates varying social circumstances. As a result, citizens need to adapt to such changes in order to sustain vital democratic traditions. Meeting this need is the mission of the social studies.

In social studies, students develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions, including but not limited to:

- Possessing basic knowledge and ways of thinking drawn from many academic disciplines
- Expressing ideas in written form
- Reading reflectively and critically
- Analyzing their own and others' opinions on social issues
- Becoming motivated to participate in civic and community life as active and informed citizens

As we work to carry on the ideals of the founders, we are compelled to revisit our fundamental beliefs and institutions and to construct new social contexts and relationships. The Iowa Core for Social Studies reflects the belief that the informed social studies student comprehends and applies to personal and public experiences the core content perspectives of the many academic fields of the social studies. Our entire social experiences, as well as our republic, are established upon the principles of individual citizenship. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to the education of those future citizens.

For that reason, the Iowa Core for Social Studies has been structured around five core social studies content areas. They are:

- Behavioral Sciences
- Economics
- Geography
- History
- Political Science/Civic Literacy

For each area, knowledge and skills have been identified and defined in terms of detailed understandings that students should be able to apply. It is of key importance that students possess the knowledge and skills associated with the economic, political, and social forces that make up the human systems in which they live. In addition, they must possess the historical knowledge which created the spatial, temporal, and cultural perspectives present in our world.

The Iowa Core for Social Studies is premised upon a rigorous and relevant K – 12 social studies program. Engaging students in the pursuit of active informed citizenship will require a broad range of understandings and skills. It will also require an articulated curriculum which connects students to the social world through informed instructional experiences led by teachers who are committed to active civic participation. This represents a bold step toward a vision of social and civic literacy for all of Iowa's students.

Behavioral Sciences

Behavioral sciences include, but are not limited to, the areas of sociology, anthropology and psychology. In addressing these disciplines the actions and reactions of humans are studied through observational and experimental methods.

Grade K Priorities - Details and Example

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand all people have individual traits.*

Examples:

- Understand that people are alike and different in many ways.
- Understand that individuals will respond to events differently.

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand interactions between self and the peer group.*

Examples:

- Understand that people often choose to dress, talk, and act like their friends.
- Understand that people often choose to do certain things their own way.
- Understand that telling and listening is a way that people can learn from others.
- Understand that disagreements occur between friends.
- Understand that rules let people understand what to expect and so can reduce the number of disputes.

Economics

Economics addresses the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. The concept of scarcity is understood to mean that available resources are insufficient to satisfy the wants and needs of everyone. Economics is therefore founded upon the alternative use of available resources and the study of choices.

Grade K Priorities - Details and Example

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand the universal economic concept of needs and wants.*

Examples:

- Understand the difference between needs and wants.
- Understand the concepts of consumers and producers.
- Understand that people make choices because they cannot have everything they want.

Geography

Geography is the study of the interaction between people and their environments. Geography therefore looks at the world through the concepts of location, place, human-environmental interaction, movement, and region.

Grade K Priorities - Details and Example

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand how geographic processes and human actions modify the environment and how the environment affects humans.*

Examples:

- Understand ways in which people depend on the physical environment.
- Understand humans impact the environment in positive and negative ways.
- Understand the environment impacts humans in positive and negative ways.
- Understand areas of a community have changed over time.

History

History is the study and analysis of the past. Built upon a foundation of historical knowledge, history seeks to analyze the past in order to describe the relationship between historical facts, concepts, and generalizations. History draws upon cause and effect relationships within multiple social narratives to help explain complex human interactions. Understanding the past provides context for the present and implications for the future.

Grade K Priorities - Details and Example

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand how and why people create and participate in governance.*

Examples:

- Understand the need for government and how our government came to be.
- Understand national symbols through which American values and principles are expressed.
- Understand factors that contribute to disputes or cooperation in groups and nations.

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand economic needs and wants affect individual and group decisions.*

Examples:

- Understand the differences between needs and wants.
- Understand the need for public and private goods and services and the workers who provide them.
- Understand the development of technological innovations and their economic effects.
- Understand changes in transportation and communication and their effects.

Political Science/Civic Literacy

NOTE: The Essential Concepts and Skills listed in Social Studies – Political Science/Civic Literacy are the same as the Essential Concepts and Skills listed in 21st Century Skills – Civic Literacy.

Political science is the study of power and authority through the examination of political processes, governmental institutions, and human behavior in a civil society. In this context the study of civics is understood to include the form and function of government. Civic literacy encompasses civics but also addresses the individual's social and political participation.

Grade K Priorities - Details and Example

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand the basic concepts of government and democracy and that the Constitution defines the rights and responsibilities of citizens.*

Examples:

- Understand what the US Constitution is and why it is important.
- Understand the purpose of rules.
- Understand the concept of fairness.
- Understand rights and responsibilities.

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